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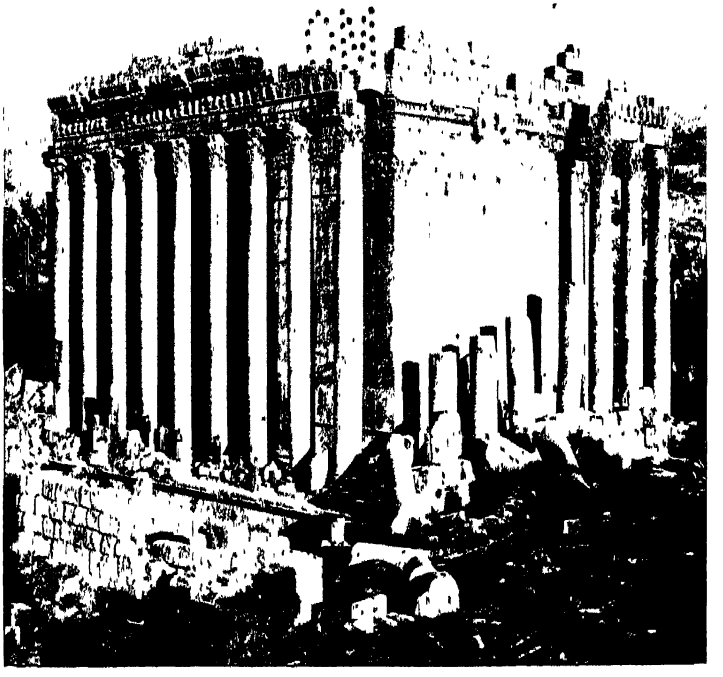
A MODERN PILGRIMAGE



THE TEMPLE OF BACCHUS AT BAALBEC

A Modern Pilgrimage

By

Mary Berenson

Qu'aujourd'hui, il me soit permis d'aller, comme au seuil de mon véritable destin, dans le proche Orient, et d'y tendre mon verre aux échansons de l'éternité.

MAURICE BARRÈS.

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To

THE INTELLIGENT (BUT NOT TOO INTELLIGENT)
THE LEARNED (BUT NOT TOO LEARNED)
AND THE CURIOUS (BUT NOT OVER-
CURIOUS) TRAVELLER
THIS BOOK IS ADDRESSED

PREFACE

IN writing this book I have set myself a somewhat less simple task than that of telling what we did from day to day and what we actually saw with our own eyes in Palestine and Syria. I have, indeed, sometimes thought that the most interesting travel book would consist of one's expectations and the dreams one indulges in about the places one is about to visit. In the presence of facts people are chained to a certain uniformity of impression, whereas when they read, the imagination is free to form images of its own. In the following pages I have tried to suggest our whole experience—dreams and facts—which was, as it must be with all cultivated travellers, much more complicated than the record of a mere travel diary.

Palestine and Syria are like the Handkerchief of Veronica, preserving still the impress of what has passed their way. Their names, familiar to us even if vaguely, since our childhood, echo in our ears from the hillsides and streams; their images rise at every hand. Think what Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Lake of Galilee mean to everyone brought up in Christian countries. They are not mere towns and villages and sheets of water. Endless are the inner echoes aroused by names like Tyre and Sidon, Mount Carmel, Mount Hermon. Such names are like stones thrown into a pool, starting ripples that prolong themselves indefinitely. Without these overtones of history, travelling is a flat affair. The ruins are, it is true,

picturesque to see, but how much more fascinating they are when imagination peoples them with the figures which haunt our minds. We cannot think of Palmyra without Zenobia; the mediaeval castles crowning rocky heights are dead unless the Crusaders are defending them against Saladin; the Euphrates is a mere muddy river without the Garden of Eden, without vanished Babylon, or Baghdad and Haroun-al-Raschid. One's reading renders one's mind exquisitely sensitive to the impressions of travel, and a journey bereft of such influences, may make—as indeed it has made in many of the old accounts of journeys—a fine tale of adventure, but now, in our days of motors and decent inns, it would probably be very tame.

It has been hard in this endlessly rich field to decide what associations to call up, what to pass over in silence. My general line has been, I admit, a personal one, namely, to dwell on the associations that interest and excite me, a person produced by a certain environment and education, although I realize that they may have a very different measure of attraction for others.

Another difficulty has met me in regard to archaeology and the various ramifications of what is called *Stylkritik*. Although I have the advantage of travelling with a scholar who has taken as his province the rise and decay, the resurrection and flowering of all forms and periods of European art, especially Mediterranean art, still I might distort his "doctrine" if I attempted to do justice to it. So I have contented myself with the scraps from his table—one does what one can!

Again in the matter of bibliography, I confess that I have not been thorough. I have mentioned the books

I most enjoyed reading on the spot and afterwards at home, and a few of the more learned books that elucidated points that interested me. Nearly all of these I found, to my surprise, I confess, in our own library which my husband has collected with great care for future students who, as we hope, will benefit from the "Institute for Humanistic Studies" which we mean to found under the auspices of our common university, Harvard. For the general reader (if such there be for my effort) these books will be more than enough. The real student can always find his own way, once he is put on the track, and any one of a dozen or so of the books I have mentioned and quoted will serve him as a point of departure.

I fear that I have foundered on most of the rocks I dreaded. I have been both pedantic and casual; I have been inappropriately learned and disappointingly superficial. I have probably made too much of my own special interest in strange cults and peculiar fanaticisms. Without the encouragement of three of the severe critics who so often glare at me in my own family circle, my husband, Bernard Berenson; my brother, Logan Pearsall Smith, and my daughter, Ray Strachey, I should never have dared to print what I have written.

My warmest thanks are due to Miss Mariano ("Nicky"), who patiently listened to the reading of the manuscript and helped me with corrections, encouragement, and suggestions, and to my secretary, Miss Ruth Alliston, who transcribed this book from my dictation. I must express my gratitude also to Mr. John Crowfoot, excavator at Jerash, who helped me with my account of that town.

I cannot end my preface without saying that almost

never in my long life so full of enjoyment, have I had such pleasure as in writing this book! It has meant living over again a fascinating journey without fatigue and discomfort; it has indelibly traced on the worn palimpsest of my memory the visions and reflections of those wonderful two months; it has satisfied the vagrant curiosities which were aroused in the course of our aesthetic and archaeological wanderings. Even the geology of that little strip of land turns out to be utterly fascinating, the flora, the fauna, the inhabitants and their religions, industries, system of government; everything we observed along our path is fringed, like the prism of a crystal, with a radiant halo. I feel as if I could go on for ever reading about and remembering just this brief two months' trip—the ripples of the pond of my imagination and curiosity have by no means subsided; I can still dip up cups full of enjoyment from its waters.

M. B.

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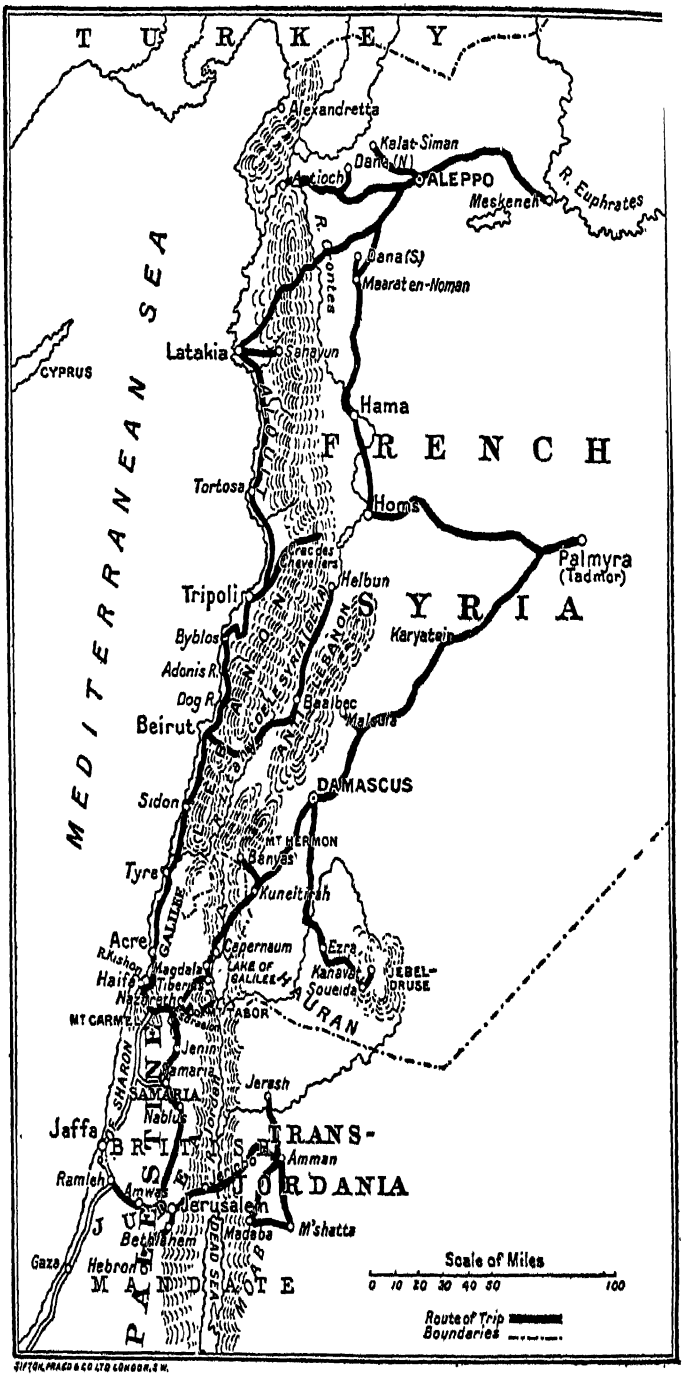

THE ROUTE OF THE PILGRIMAGE

CHAPTER I

ITALY TO SYRIA

The highest value of travel is . . . the faith it inspires in the scope of human genius.

—THE HOWADJI IN SYRIA

JUNE 4TH, 1929.

WE have returned from our trip to Palestine and Syria with the traveller's usual illusion that no one has ever really made exactly the same trip before, or appreciated as we have the beauty and interest it offered. Many people have travelled through those regions and have recorded their impressions and the results of their observations of a scientific or an archaeological kind, they have given thrilling accounts of adventures with the native tribes, and have dwelt on their contacts with the civilized inhabitants; they have described all the religious ceremonies of the Christian sects, of the Jews, and of the Mahometans, who gather, not too peaceably, in Jerusalem; they have traced (with doubtful accuracy) the footsteps of Christ through the Holy Land, or marked the ruins of that opulent builder, Herod the Great, and have followed with

eager interest in the steps of the Crusaders. No land is more minutely mapped out historically than the Holy Land. Why have we returned feeling that nobody has ever been there before?

The fact is that travelling for us—outside of European museums and collections and Renaissance monuments, which we have gone over, notebook in hand, again and again during the last forty-five years—is first and foremost an aesthetic adventure, an adventure in enjoyment, in the satisfaction of the lust of the eyes. Complete ecstasy, of course, is a brief experience, yet the panorama of nature prolongs it beyond the stretch of all other pleasures. It is true that we always had archaeology to fall back upon in our drier and more intellectual moments. And this, I am inclined to think, is a very important thing, for after a time of ecstatic contemplation the mind wakes up and insists upon having its share. No doubt a geologist or botanist, naturalist or engineer, or many another specialist would find an occupation for his mind and for his intellectual curiosity quite as satisfactory as we found in our endeavour to trace the passing over of classic art into that of the Middle Ages. But the latter happened to be our chief hobby on this trip and it certainly gave a shape and content to our wanderings. Our avowed aim was archaeology, but our reward was nature, and my husband often said in

his paradoxical way, "The study of art is only a preparation for the enjoyment of landscape." Yet we never passed a heap of old ruins without his forgetting all about the entrancing landscape in which it was more than likely set, to dart like a lizard in and out between the stones, shouting to us to come and look at some form of debased classic sculpture, or to call for some of the books we carried with us to help him in reconstructing the plan of the ruins.

I have said that archaeology was our avowed interest, but I myself cherished another curiosity, unshared by my fellow travellers, my husband and our beloved librarian, the congenial and helpful companion since many years of all our aesthetic adventures, all our studies, all our experiences, Elisabetta Mariano, whom I shall allude to in these pages by her familiar name of Nicky. My husband instinctively detests all that is unreasonable or emotionally unbalanced in human behaviour and thought: he has to contemplate it more often than he likes, in his general historical and cultural researches, but he does not go out to seek it. Nor does Nicky, whose widely tolerant outlook and instinctive common sense lead her to regard human aberrations in a comic rather than in a tragic light. But my youth was passed in an atmosphere of religious speculation, and I can never quite shake off the feeling that religion is the thing that

chiefly matters to mankind. Many experiments were made by my parents, who passed from Quakerism, through the Baptist, the Methodist and the Plymouth Brethren sects, and entertained all the fanaticisms current in America during the latter half of the last century. Our home generally harboured an enthusiast or two who had a scheme of his own for getting to heaven, and we children were obliged to open the doors of the sitting-rooms softly in the fear of disturbing a prayer-meeting or interrupting an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The whole thing has left me in a somewhat anomalous condition of mixed interest and unbelief; and I confess that all varieties of religious faith and practice are almost as near to my heart as the various expressions of the art-instinct in man. It may be that they spring from the same source, the longing to create for ourselves a world that shall be more ordered, more significant than the actual world—the desire to attain harmony with the universe. Standing outside the attempted religious explanations of God's dealing with mankind, yet profoundly interested in all these explanations, I sometimes seem to myself, paradoxical as it appears, to occupy a position of vantage in observing them, for I have no doctrine to uphold, no system of dogma or ritual to advocate. Yet I am deeply interested, and the prospect of

spending some weeks in that narrow strip of land that lies between Egypt and Asia Minor was doubly fascinating to me from the fact that just this section of the world has been, beyond all other regions, the native home of religious cults, the breeding-place of Gods and Devils, a narrow tract where the crust is thin, and the forces of religion break out in volcanoes, some of which are extinct, and some still flaming and seething and smoking. It is full of shrines and holy and unholy places; it is still the goal of religious pilgrims and the home of religious hatreds. Dogmatic and doctrinal differences, though obsolete in the rest of the world, rage furiously here. Fanatics still come from the West to develop their peculiar cults upon this propitious soil.

THE SEA VOYAGE

Our boat, coming to Brindisi from Triest, started at nine in the morning. It turned out to be a steamship that specialized in conveying Zionists to the Holy Land. The captain is an enthusiastic Zionist and looks upon himself as the patriarch of the flock of fifty to a hundred Jew nationalists that he carries to Jaffa every trip. He loves them and provides for their comfort in every way, letting them wander all over the ship without much distinction as to classes, and giving them their "kosher" food.

We spent a great deal of our time looking down

from our deck into the comfortable steerage where most of the Jewish passengers were lodged. Some of the people looked very strange, and a good many talked Hebrew. They often sang Hebrew words set to music that had much that was Slav in it. We could not help feeling that it was a crazy idea to bring all those incongruous people to the barren land of Judea, already inhabited by hostile Arabs, and to handicap the young people by making them talk Hebrew and teaching them only in this language. Perhaps they will end by making some sort of a success of it, but surely everything is against it, with only their fanatical enthusiasm and a certain backing of foreign capital from rich Jews (who thus salve their consciences for not going there themselves), to balance the disadvantage of climate and soil, unaccustomed surroundings and hostile neighbours. Yet the power of an Idea is not to be calculated. Faith can truly move mountains.

Most of the Jewish immigrants got out at Jaffa (the ancient Joppa), going ashore in small boats manned by shouting Arabs. On stormy days the landing is impossible, for there is no harbour, and we could not help thinking, as we watched them land, of the Crusaders and all the pilgrims through the centuries who were beaten back by inclement seas from their longed-for haven, or landed amidst perils at the risk of their lives. With a steam-

ship the modern pilgrim can be carried on in a few hours to Haifa where there is a sort of harbour that makes landing easier, but what could it have been for sailing boats? This is perhaps the first thing that strikes one about the whole coast of Palestine—the complete absence of harbours till you get to Haifa. The Romans, it is true, made an artificial port between Jaffa and Haifa—Caesarea —but already in the fourth century it was choked with the fine sand sifting up from the mouth of the Nile at the rate of three feet a year, and by now the dunes extend three and a half miles to the east of the old port. This invasion of sand is at last being countered by planting a belt of firs.

While we stood on the deck watching the landing of the Jewish immigrants, we looked for Andromeda's rock which in St. Jerome's time was pointed out with the ring to which her chains were attached, and we recalled the legend that it was at Joppa that Noah and his company entered the ark, and that this was the port from which Jonah took ship to escape from the anger of Jehovah. Joppa, more reliably, was the place where Hiram's fleets discharged the Cedars of Lebanon for the building of Solomon's Temple. Crusaders under Richard Coeur de Lion and Paynims under Saladin massacred each other within and without the walls until St. Louis assured its possession to the Christians, who held it till the last Crusaders left the

country. Napoleon took it from the Turks, but it very soon fell back to them again. Now Arabs, English and Zionists divide the place and its rule—not always peaceably! As we gazed on the outline of the town, with its palms and minarets showing through the early morning mist, those clouds of legend and history and association that make travelling in Palestine such a unique experience began to gather round us, and we began to be haunted by the echoes of the antique world that followed us during all our trip, by Christian and Moslem legends, by Ghosts of Crusaders, of Paynims, of Patriarchs and Conquerors.

OUR DRAGOMAN

On the morning of May 5, we arrived at Beirut. Our dragoman, Iskander Haiek, dressed in European clothes but wearing the high tarbush, or fez, common in Syria, came on board and we had a little chat over the possibilities of the trip. Everything seemed to be beautifully planned according to the desires that had arisen in our minds from reading books of travel and archaeology, with one exception, and that, alas, the trip to Petra. When Iskander saw me walking with a stick he said firmly, "This lady cannot go to Petra." It was a great disappointment, but when we heard from other people who had been there about the long and difficult scramble, on indifferent mounts,

over rocks and down steep declines where the horses have literally to slide, a scramble which reduces even youthful and hardened travellers to a sorry state of stiffness and fatigue, we realized that our dragoman's advice, disappointing as it seemed, was probably sensible. Our trip was otherwise satisfactorily planned, but it turned out in the end that travellers like ourselves were outside our dragoman's experience. He had just been conducting some rich travellers on a hasty, *de luxe* scamper through Palestine and Syria, and he was accustomed to the tourist who has enough curiosity to see the principal sights once, and even to those who want to push on to more out-of-the-way places, but he could not fit into his conception of travellers people who, when in Jerusalem, wanted to go every day to the Mosque of Omar, and who insisted on returning again and again to the same sights and the same views. To us he was always extremely obliging and courteous, but he voiced his amazement mingled with despair to my maid, while his chauffeurs joined in many a joke over casual heaps of stones passed by on the roadside, saying, "Mr. Berenson ought to stay here with his spy-glasses at least an hour!"

HOTELS

Although in some respects the Hotel d'Orient at Beirut is a good hotel, we began there our ex-

perience of noise and light that lasted in varying degrees everywhere we lodged during the next two months. The motors have learnt no discretion either in hooting or changing gear, or in moderating the escape; trams screech and ring their bells, and itinerant vendors cry their wares both early and late, while metal-workers hammer ceaselessly. And even where the windows are provided with blinds, there is generally an unshuttered lunette on the top of a window or, high up in the walls, those unshaded round openings so characteristic of Turkish architecture. One can deal more or less with light by putting a black silk handkerchief over one's eyes; but the activity of the flies, more than the light, renders sleeping after daylight nearly impossible except to those thrice lucky individuals, blessed by the gods, who put their heads on their pillows and sleep till they are called in the morning. As I remember the hotels of Palestine and Syria, the noisiest was perhaps the one at Damascus, or possibly that at Tripoli, although the St. John's Hotel at Jerusalem comes very close to them, even without motors, for there the human cries of all kinds were most insistent, and were only intermitted for a couple of hours in the early morning. While we were travelling we received, as often as might be, copies of the London *Times* and, as it happened, they contained at this period much correspondence about the hymn of praise the

birds sing just before dawn. I often thought of this at sunrise in the Near East, for the human animal seems to be impelled to his greatest activity of lung, hammer and broom when the sun rises. By seven or eight he gets moderately quiet again, but his early morning hymn is enough to rasp the nerves of the traveller into lasting wakefulness.

BEIRUT

At Beirut[1] we found a very intelligent and cultivated set of new acquaintances among the French officials. M. Maugras, Secretary of the Commissariat, I called the "Young Man on the Bridge at Baghdad" (after the one in the Arabian Nights who sat by the river and took home each evening a new passer-by with whom he ate and drank and talked all night and then sent away with the benediction of Allah, meaning never to see him again), for he bade us dine with him and gave us, though strangers, an enchanting evening in his charmingly furnished house. It was pleasant to find so far from France young men who knew their Proust by heart, and who read George Eliot with appreciation, and loved Gluck and Bach and Mozart. But of course they are really Parisians accidentally here, and they have little resemblance to the rich Syrians whom we met. Behind them all is that background of responsibility and achievement that gives an unusual depth and interest to the society

of those who bear rule in foreign parts. We were much struck by it seven years ago in Egypt where we made friends with the English officials; and again in Beirut, meeting M. Ponsot, the High Commissioner, and his secretaries and assistants, we had the same impression of seriousness and competence beneath their sociability. M. Maurice Guérin, who was running the Hachette Bookshop there, was extremely kind and helpful, and gave us the chance of meeting some of the archaeologists who were passing through the town. Among them were M. Dussaud, whose books on Syria and its people we had brought with us; M. Deschamps, head of the Trocadero, working at Kerak; Baron Oppenheim, the German explorer, a passionate and able archaeologist; and several other scholars interested in Syria's past. We met also M. Viraullaud, the head of the archaeological service, with whom, later on, we visited the Beirut Museum. It was full of those "interesting" odds and ends, which in some moods, and especially when a scirocco is blowing, make one despair of art; but there were some which I call "real" things too: a fine Phoenician sarcophagus, a strangely Bernini-like head of an old man, and, above all, a black and gold vase or drinking-horn from Byblos, which was absolutely perfect, as only small *objets d'art* can be, for they suggest no perfection beyond themselves, as great art always does.

We were even more interested in a way, though the milieu was less congenial, to meet some of the Syrians. We were kindly invited to lunch at the house of one of the leading financiers. The marble gilt palace where we were received, only redeemed by a wonderful view of the snowy Lebanon range and an incredibly blue sea, was a provincial version of what we are accustomed to call *le style Rothschild.* Amazingly soft carpets, amazingly carved chairs and tables, marble and bronze statues jumping out at you from every corner, pictures in heavy gilt frames thick on the walls, marble columns and floors and enormous plate glass windows, made up an *ensemble* with which we had become familiar in our pilgrimages to the private collections of Europe; but here there were no pictures or *objets d'art* to which anybody other than an auctioneer would be likely to make a pilgrimage. We sat down to a Lucullan lunch, while the latest thing in gramophones, capable of playing ten discs in succession without being rewound, shrieked from a corner of the dining-room and made conversation impossible. We were upheld by the feeling that *das sollte so sein.*

Our most exotic sociability in Beirut, however, was a very ceremonious function at the house of our dragoman. We entered through a pleasant little garden into a huge airy room lined with divans and filled with Haieks of all ages and sexes

smoking hubble-bubbles. Madame Haiek made on us a very pleasant impression, and the two little daughters were enchanting. After shaking hands and exchanging wordless grins all round, for naturally we did not speak Arabic, I joined the ladies in a hubble-bubble and found it very agreeable. Then we had a Gargantuan sit-down tea, from which we could never have stood up if we had eaten half the things provided. We did our best, and what remained was generously packed up in boxes and sent to our hotel. Some of the women, although tending to be very fat, were extremely good looking, and it appears that several of them were married at thirteen or fourteen, because they were so pretty that the family thought it best to seal their charms at once to some responsible member of the clan.

THE MARONITES

Perhaps this is the best point at which to describe another visit to our dragoman's relations, although it took place towards the very end of our trip. It led us into the heart of the Lebanon range, the chief seat of the Maronite branch of the Catholic Church. Maronites are also found in the Anti-Lebanon, a range farther inland, which runs parallel to the coast range, and they exist elsewhere in Syria, but most of them are to be found in the high villages that cling to the terraces or crown

the rugged ridges of the beautiful mountains upon which, across the bay, the promontory of Beirut looks out. I do not want to be pedantic, but an interest in this section of the people imposes itself almost as soon as one lands at Beirut. And our interest was fomented day by day by that enthusiastic patriot and celebrator of the glories of his birthplace and of his religion, our Maronite dragoman from the Lebanon.

The Maronite sect, then, claims to have been founded by a Patriarch of Antioch, Yuhannan Marun, who died in 707, but a misty legend goes even further back to St. Marun who died in Antioch in 400. The historical basis is, however, so vague that the Roman Church, although it has incorporated some of the Maronite Saints, has never canonized either of its reputed founders. The Maronites were converted to Catholicism by the Crusaders in 1182 and fought with them, many falling at Damietta in Egypt in St. Louis' ill-fated expedition. But they remained in very unstable equilibrium of doctrine and discipline until they formally united with Rome at the Council of Florence in 1445, renouncing their monophysite heresy of Christ's having but one Nature. They did not, however, accept Roman discipline till 1736, when they gave up convents of mixed nuns and monks, being allowed nevertheless to retain the Syriac liturgy and the marriage of their priests.

The latter is said to be now going out. The clash and fury over their final acceptance of certain Catholic regulations still echoes in old accounts. One can understand that the Pope insisted on being mentioned in the Mass, and it was a matter of politics to reduce the great number of bishoprics to eight, but it begins to seem odd that they were ready to kill each other over the question of whether the altar bread should be round or square in shape and whether it should be made of flour and water only —as was the Syrian custom—or mixed with oil and salt according to the Roman use.

The Maronites were given a certain political autonomy in 1861, after the Druse massacres, when, Turkey remaining suzerain, France intervened to protect the Christians in Syria. From that time on they have been called the Lebanon Republic, and they aspire to even fuller measures of independence than they have under the present French mandate. It would seem that they deserve it, for not only is the Maronite clergy better educated than their Greek and Jacobite neighbours, but the level of civilization is higher than anywhere else in Syria. The impression that the Maronites make is somehow an impression of almost Protestant downrightness and thrift and independence. They must be, however, strongly Catholic, for monasteries seem to crown every peak and precipice of this part of the Lebanon.

We were taken to a Maronite convent in the fertile tableland behind Tripoli, and our dragoman had enough influence to have us admitted, in spite of the *Clausura,* to the arcaded courtyard and terrace where the bearded monks were sunning themselves and resting from their labours in the well-kept fields belonging to the monastery.

Now that they have been forced to stop their age-long warfare with the Druses, who after 1861 have mostly moved to the Hauran mountains south-east of Damascus, they are becoming extremely prosperous and are exploiting the beautiful climate and scenery of their mountain home for a summer resort; and, indeed, it is becoming more and more popular among the richer Syrians and Egyptians to spend the summer months there enjoying the mountain air and the incredibly lovely scenery.

VISIT TO THE LEBANON

Our road to Beitshebab, where the family of our dragoman lived, turned off from the main road and led through pine groves and plantations of mulberry and olives to a neat Maronite village, and to the airy clean mansion of the brother of our dragoman, where we were only too well entertained for lunch. We were very much struck with the intelligence and good looks of the men of the clan and the beauty of the women, but with the latter we could do no more than exchange

a few difficult remarks in French, and it seems that they were not expected to take much part in the social life, not even sitting down to table with their men.

CHAPTER II

FROM BEIRUT TO MOUNT CARMEL

Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of thy handiworks: they traded for thy wares with emeralds, purple and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral and rubies. —EZEKIEL

AFTER our pleasant three days at Beirut, we left early in the morning for Mount Carmel, on the way to Jerusalem. Our road to the south passed at first by the beautiful cliffs and rocky islands that end the peninsula on which the town is built. These islands look like the feet of great elephants, a most curious formation, and they are pierced with grottoes which people visit in boats towards sunset to see the remarkable play of colours on the waters inside. Then we suddenly found ourselves running through the desert, here of a reddish colour, which all over Syria seems to be merely pushed back by the efforts of man, but is waiting always to drift in again, borne by the wind from the east and south of Egypt, a tide which knows no turn, and brings to naught all human achievement. M. Maugras had, the night before, very pertinently compared it to the Bedouins, al-

ways ready to drift into and lay waste the cultivated portions of Syria.

After the desert, rocks again, or fields sloping down to the water's edge, where a strong wind was beating the green sea into foamy sparkles and curves—fields turned green by endless streams singing their way down from the Lebanon hills, fertile with the fertility of alluvial soil, but diversified by rocky swelling hills and promontories. This coast recalled in its uncontaminated beauty the coast of Calabria, with the same trees and flowers —laurels, myrtles, roses, oleanders, flowering reeds, passion-flowers and all sorts of evergreen shrubs, cleared here and there to make place for orchards of figs, olives, vines, pomegranates, lemons, oranges and walnuts, and for vineyards. It is an idyllic, unspoiled Riviera, yet judging by the half-buried remains that line the way and reach back everywhere from the coast to the mountains, towns must once have been here as thick as bees around a hive. Today only the rifled tombs in the rocks along the way and the wine-presses overgrown with weeds and shrubs remain to tell what they can of the fate of the old inhabitants of a region that was as closely and continuously settled as are now the shores of the Bosphorus above Constantinople—a region whose eventful history runs back to the earliest records of our race.

LADY HESTER STANHOPE

I can hardly tell why it should be, but there is a longing for the East, very commonly felt by proud-hearted people, when goaded by sorrow.—EOTHEN

Our first stop was at Sidon, which is now a miserable little village on a promontory faced by islands. I had wanted to turn aside to make a pilgrimage to Dhâr Juni (Djoun), the spur of the Lebanon where Lady Hester Stanhope held her piebald court, but this would have taken too long, as the road was very bad, nor can we claim to be sentimental travellers in the genuine sense. We had just been reading, however, the two accounts, one by Lamartine [1] and the other by Kinglake,[2] of their visits to "Chatham's fiery granddaughter," and I was disappointed not to be able to take the chance to see the surroundings among which the melodrama of her life was played out to its sordid ending. An interesting and not unsympathetic appreciation of her character is given by the Reverend W. M. Thomson who officiated at her funeral in June, 1839. "What a death!" he says: "Without a European attendant—without a friend, male or female—alone, on the top of this black mountain, her lamp of life growing dimmer and more dim, until it went quite out in a hopeless, rayless night. Such was the end of the once gay and brilliant niece of Pitt, presiding in the saloons of

the master-spirit of Europe, and familiar with the intrigues of kings and cabinets." [8]

For me she had a certain interest on account of the peculiar mysticism she elaborated for herself in her solitude. Lamartine thus describes her religious system, which she tried to inculcate on him (as upon Kinglake):

> An able though confused mixture of the different religions she has condemned herself to live among; mysterious as are the Druses, of whom, perhaps, she alone, in the world knows the mystic secret; resigned like the Moslem fatalist; with the Jew, expecting the Messiah; professing, with the Christian, an adoration for Christ and the practice of His morals, His charity. Add to all this, the fantastic colours and the supernatural dreams of an imagination tinged with the East and stimulated by solitude and meditation, perhaps by some revelations of Arab astrologers, and you will gain a faint idea of this sublime and bizarre mélange which it is easier to call madness than to analyse and understand.

As our motor left her mountain retreat behind, I thought of her furious, haughty, independent spirit, her penetrating but wildly superstitious mind, her dream of riding as a Queen into Jerusalem at the side of a new Messiah to inaugurate the millennium. I saw her in her fancied character as a second Zenobia, dressed as a desert chieftain, galloping into Palmyra at the head of a horde of wild Arabs whom she subdued into admiration by

her courage and the glance of her eagle eyes. I felt a lively irritation with her for placing her semi-imperial residence in a perfectly waterless spot, and a tenderness for her English passion for gardening that brought up unending trains of mules from far below carrying enough water to convert her barren hill into a maze of shady walks and a paradise of flowers. Even to pass along the highroad from which the path to her former domain branches off, somehow made the whole strange tale paint itself upon my imagination in hues more vivid than print can convey, and clad the bare hills we looked upon with romance and tragedy.

SIDON

Sidon was, in a sense, only a place of sentimental pilgrimage, for almost nothing remains of the famous capital, one of the most ancient as well as the most prosperous of the Phoenician coast towns. To live "after the manner of the Sidonians" (Judges 18:7) was the proverbial symbol of ease and prosperity. She was the mother of more than one strong-walled city on her coast—of Beirut, Acre, Tyre and many another—and she had colonies in Cyprus and the Greek Islands, and as far off as Libya and Spain. The story of her slow decline brings onto the stage Egyptian conquerors, Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, Greek and Roman

destroyers and overlords. Sidon was described by a fourth-century geographer as still the first commercial city of Syria. To the Romans it was especially associated with the famous purple dye, as the murex which produced this was found only on the neighbouring strip of coast.[4]

All this was brought home to us as we went looking in Sidon for the remains of the Crusaders' castle and found only its miserable ruins standing on a mound composed of murex shells. The once thronged harbour of Sidon has not been kept up, and our most memorable experience in the village was buying some exceptionally delicious oranges, although our memories held the fact that in antiquity lovely glass was made there, from the siliceous sand of the near-by river Naaman, and that the silver cup which Achilles offered as a prize in the footrace was the work of a silversmith of Sidon. We recalled, too, that the "Tomb of Alexander" which a few months before we had admired in the Museum of Constantinople, was found here, and we even remembered incongruously that Jezebel was a princess of Sidon. But the Sidon of today, shorn of historical and artistic associations, is only a filthy little fishing village on a lovely coast.

TYRE

We ate our oranges from Sidon with our lunch in an arbour belonging to a rest-house on the road

overlooking the sea; it was a charming place, frequented by sportsmen and their dogs who brought in strings of quail and snipe. After "making *Kief*" (the Arab word meaning relaxation and repose) on the beach, lulled by the softly breaking waves, we went on to Tyre, which was not very far away, the road leading along the sandy beach. We crossed the river Litany, the ancient Leontes, which rises at Baalbec and then, after a furious struggle with the mountain range, pierces the Lebanon and reaches the sea, descending four thousand feet in its hundred-and-twenty-mile course. Its Arab name at the coast is Kasimeyeh, which means "division," and it in fact divided the Holy Land from the territory of Sidon. It was here that we had our first glimpse of Mount Hermon, hanging like a pale cloud in the sky, far away in the northeast. The "White-haired Sheik" from here is seen to have two heads, which may account for its being mentioned in the dual or plural in the Old Testament.

At Tyre again the harbour has been silted up and ruined and the Crusaders' church torn down. Walking out on the small mole, we saw lying in a great stretch of shallow water a vast jumble of broken columns and fragments of carved capitals, witnessing to the greatness of Tyre in antiquity. It is hard to connect this wretched, melancholy village with the proud town described by Isaiah

as "the crowning city, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth," the city of which Ezekiel said, "The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market and thou wast replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas"; and who said of herself: "I am a God; I sit in the seat of God" (Ezekiel 28:2); or with the fortified town that resisted Nebuchadnezzar and his hosts for thirteen years, until "every head in his army was bald and every shoulder peeled" in the exertions of the siege, and where, in his turn, Alexander was so long held at bay. But, as a pious writer says, "The Christian would not have it otherwise," for did not Jehovah Himself pledge His word through the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel that it should be so? "Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God." Our writer concludes that now, as God's witness to the truth of His prophecy, "she is a greater blessing to the world than in the day of her highest prosperity." [5]

Students of Church history will not fail to recall that Origen spent his last years in Tyre. In

fact, his grave is still pointed out as that of a great magician, Oriundus, where, they say, magical works are hidden.

ACRE

St. Jean d'Acre was our next stop—the ancient Ptolemais, where St. Paul once spent a day—and here an unexpected aesthetic treat awaited us in the mosque set on a low hill overlooking the main street. The greatest associations of the place are with Saladin and the Crusaders—Richard Coeur de Lion, Frederick Barbarossa, the Knights of St. John. It was at Acre also that, in 1799, Napoleon's plans of conquest in the Near East, like the Crusaders' plans, finally broke down. Acre is also the scene of a well-known legend from the time of St. Louis of a monk who met an old woman threading the streets of Acre, with a cruse of water and a pan of coals. He asked her why she carried them, and she said: "The water is to extinguish Hell and the fire to burn up Heaven, so that man's selfishness may have nothing to feed on, and he may learn to love God for Himself alone." There was also a local prophecy to the effect that when the water of the nearby river Belus should reach the east gate of Acre, the English would take the town. In 1910 the river came so close to the gate that the authorities thought fit to sacrifice a number of sheep between the river and the gate, after which

Belus moved away from the walls. In 1917 the river forgot to warn the town!

But to unsentimental travellers like ourselves the actual monument that met our eyes was more attractive than any historical association. This mosque, built by a Pasha who died in 1801, was constructed out of ancient materials. With its green domes it recalled the mosques of Constantinople, where the good tradition of Turkish architecture still persists, but it is chiefly remarkable for the fine antique columns from Caesarea that support the porch. The quiet paved courtyard or cloister, with its big cypresses and palms and its beautiful fountain, had not only architectural beauty but also an irresistible *Stimmung,* breathing retirement, peace, and graceful, kindly decay.

THE BÁB [6]

Once again at Acre I had a baffled desire to stray, this time to pay a visit to the Behá, head of one section of the Ba'abist religion, who lives there, for I had known not a few Ba'abists in England and France, and had followed with some attention the history of this sect. Its beginnings—among the Shi'ites of Persia, some ninety years ago—were outside my personal knowledge, but I know that it became so powerful that it was looked upon as a danger and persecuted. The founder, a young visionary named Mirza' Ali Muhummed, called

himself the Báb (gate) and, as so many others have done throughout the ages, he claimed to be the latest incarnation of the Divine Wisdom. People love to give credence to such a claim, especially if the claimant be a fascinating human being, as this young man seems to have been, and the six years of persecution that he and his followers endured only increased their fervour, which was not lessened even when the Báb was put to death in 1850, still asserting, like Christ, the speedy "end of all things" and the glorious material triumph of his sect. Apparently before his death he moderated his own claims, taking up the position of a Precursor and prophesying a Greater than himself who should manifest the deity even more clearly. This superior manifestation was a boy of eighteen to whom he gave the name of Subr-i-ezel, the Dawn of Eternity. Under persistent persecution the Dawn betook himself to Baghdad, whence, after some years, the Persian and Turkish governments arranged to deport him to Constantinople. At this point his step-brother, Behá-u'llal, tried to usurp his place, declaring that he was the real Dawn of Eternity designated by the Báb as his successor. There was so much friction that the Turkish government in 1868 separated the brothers and sent the one to dawn upon Cyprus while Behá was banished to Acre; there he lived, slightly modifying his doctrine and purging it of its Mahometan

traces, opposing polygamy, the veiling of women, the beards of men, and he preached—needs must! —a deferred millennium. Before his death he designated his son, Abbas Effendi as his successor, and I thought this leader was still living as a semi-prisoner in Acre.* Pilgrims, I knew, visited him from all parts of the world for his blessing; he is said to have a following of fifty thousand in that land of religious liberty, the United States; and in Paris a temple for Ba'abist worship has been set up. His followers wear stars and amulets of stones and circles. Two millions is now the estimated number of Ba'abists.

MOUNT CARMEL

But the setting sun warned us that it was time to be going on to Haifa, so we started along the pale crescent beach between the white breakers and the wall of palm trees, passing by moonlight through Haifa, not stopping to visit the "Persian Garden" where the Báb and Abbas Effendi are buried, and up Mount Carmel to the newly-built, clean and commodious Carmelite Hostel, "Stella Maris," on the top. There we met our two American friends who had come from Egypt. We slept to the sound of waves breaking far below us and awoke to a magnificent view from our windows,

*I have since heard that he died in 1921, and that his successor, a grandson, Shogi Effendi Rabani, is free to go wherever he likes, and is by no means always at Acre.

of the sea circled by mountains and coast, right up to the lighthouse of Tyre on the north, and across the Plain of Sharon to Caesarea on the south. Acre looked like a magic town out of the Arabian Nights, opal-coloured on a misty blue lake. We walked out the next morning a little way up the road that leads to the spot where the miracle of Elijah took place. As it was very hot we did not go all the way, but we imagined the priests of Baal, calling upon their god from morning till noon, and when he answered not, leaping wildly but in vain upon their altar and cutting themselves with knives and lances "after their manner," while Elijah's servant scanned the horizon for the cloud which God finally sent to bring water to the parched land and to show that the God of Israel could reward as well as punish His people. Here descended the fire from God upon the altar of Elijah and consumed the sacrifice. The people were convinced; they returned to the worship of Jehovah, and, at the command of Elijah, "Let not one escape," they slew all the priests of Baal at the river Kishon below the mountain—alas, that slaying has so often accompanied the manifestations of Jehovah! Jew, Christian, Moslem, and Druse still account this site a Holy Place, one of the few sacred "high places," of which the tradition has never been broken. Josephus wrote,

"There is between Judea and Syria a mountain and a god both called by the name of Carmel," and he describes Vespasian turning aside and climbing to the summit to consult the oracle about a "secret thought he had in his mind." There is a not impossible legend that Pythagoras dwelt for a while on Mount Carmel in company with the hermits who from time immemorial have inhabited its caverns and grottoes on the western slope.

The Carmelite monks, whose unsightly modern convent and church are visible from afar, claim unbroken descent from a direct successor of Elijah, and I presume this is "of faith" since seven Popes have given their seals to a written statement of its truth.

Carmel, the "Mount of God," is, owing to unusually heavy dews, one of the few spots in Palestine that remain green all the year round. "The excellency of Carmel" is used by Solomon as a figure for human beauty, and Isaiah uses the same phrase to designate the lavish blessings and gifts of the Lord. The mountain is richly wooded with oaks and pines. Wild apples and pear trees, pomegranates, myrtles, olives, carobs, thickets of juniper and acacia and dwarf live-oaks clothe its slopes, while sage, rosemary, lavender and many another herb perfume the air. Wild flowers, when

we were there, were covering it like a carpet, the pale roses of the cystus, scarlet and purple anemones, pink campion, cyclamen from white to purplish-pink, blue campanulas, bugloss and grape hyacinths, daisies, the pale purple scabious, blue and scarlet pimpernel, and rose-bushes flinging themselves along the crumbling walls. Bird-haunted, too, was this lovely wilderness: larks filled the air with their sliding silvery cadences; an eagle swam above; a bird like the Egyptian "Horus," but without its peculiar cry, flew from tree to tree; I thought I saw a company of the mysterious "ghost birds" of the Bosphorus restlessly skimming the sea below, and we heard the tapping of woodpeckers and a shepherd piping to his goats. Even from our pagan point of view Mount Carmel is one of the Sacred Spots of the earth, being one of the most beautiful.

HAIFA

Haifa lies at the foot of the mountain and is the one spot on the coast of Palestine remotely resembling a harbour. Elsewhere are only rocks that wreck, ledges for seabirds, or shallow beaches, for the Nile sand, drifted up to the northeast by the prevailing winds, had long ago silted up all the deep places along the shore. Haifa, behind the shoulder of Mount Carmel, has more or less escaped this slow encroachment, and it is a grow-

ing and flourishing town, with cement and other manufactories at one end, and, at the other, near the point of the promontory, a thrifty German settlement.

CHAPTER III

JERUSALEM

GEOGRAPHY AND CHARACTER OF JUDEA

BEAUTIFUL as are Mount Carmel and the road from it to Jerusalem, steeped in historical and religious associations as is every parcel of the land, these are not the only things that impose themselves upon the traveller. Even those who set out to confine their attention to beauty and archaeology cannot but end by taking a fascinated interest in geology and geography, the basis and chief determinating factor of all these. Fortunately two books were at hand among our *impedimenta* that completely responded to this curiosity, carrying it on in many more directions than uninstructed interest could lead one, and being at the same time informing and delightful reading. The first of these books, Principal Sir George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*,[1] is one of the most thoughtful and suggestive books ever written, although undertaken with the object inspiring so many scientific and archaeological investigations in Palestine, of proving the accuracy of the Scriptures. It is one

of those books which take hold of the mind, enthralling and instructing and convincing it in such a way that one cannot imagine not always having had it in the back of one's thought. The other book is *Palestine and Its Transformation,*[2] by Professor Ellsworth Huntington, a book less lofty in tone, but clear, enlightening and exceedingly readable. I have therefore in the following brief account and elsewhere through my book made grateful use of these two books which organized the vagrant wandering and impressions that crowded our minds on that motor-ride from Mount Carmel to Jerusalem.

Professor Huntington describes the way in which the earth's crust has been, within the last two million years, warped and uplifted for a hundred and fifty miles along the east coast of the Mediterranean, the process being, he thinks, perhaps not quite finished. The main north to south elevation was complicated by minor uplifts, some parallel to and some at an angle to the main uplift. He compares it to a gridiron, a simile which easily stays in the minds of the most uninstructed. To put it far more briefly than I like to do, the two main bars can be thought of as the Lebanon range near the coast which prolongs itself into the heights of Judea, and the Anti-Lebanon range farther inland, prolonging itself through the hills of Bashan, the heights of Galilee, and the mountains

of Moab. Between these bars the earth is bent sharply down, as one might bend a sheet of paper, forming in the north the Valley of Coelesyria five thousand feet or more below the two Lebanon ranges that shut it in. This bend continues south till, east of Judea, it becomes an actual fracture with sharp cliffs and a central wedge dropping five thousand feet to form the deep Valley of the Jordan and the still deeper depression of the Dead Sea. A fertile coast plain of varying width flanks the first bar, while the second, east of the Jordan, passes imperceptibly into the limitless rolling desert, but a desert of flinty gravel upon which one can drive all the way to the Euphrates without any road. The major features of Palestine—and Syria also—are determined by these north and south movements of the earth.

The minor features, which Mr. Huntington describes as the cross-bars of the gridiron, depend upon lines of flexure or faults running mainly northwest and southeast but often swinging definitely to east and west. The first of these depressions is at the south end of Palestine where the land sinks two thousand feet forming a passage from the Mediterranean to the Valley of the Dead Sea. The next cross-bar separates Samaria from Judea, and, on the east of the Jordan, Gilead from Moab. The third cross-bar consists of the Fault of Esdraelon. It extends from the coast to the Jor-

dan Valley; and, across on the other side of the valley, as a slighter bending of the earth's crust, the continuation of the Fault divides Bashan from the wooded heights of Gilead. On the west there is an upward movement of the rocks south of Esdraelon giving rise to the heights of Carmel and Gilboa. The fourth, less accentuated, cross-bar of the gridiron separates Palestine from Syria with the river Litany, the old Leontes, running between them. These cross-bars with the narrow north and south heights of Palestine, which take the form of a long zigzag central spine, throwing out sharp ribs to right and left, give the whole country that astonishing diversity of physical form which cannot but arouse the traveller's curiosity. The map will, I hope, make this explanation more clear.

Of course the interest of all this is not, for travellers like ourselves, the mere geographical facts, but the influence they had in forming the congeries of the strangely differing peoples with their so diverse histories.* The rocky isolation of Judea, a country never hellenized as was all the rest of the near Orient, the millennial conflict to get possession of the favoured lands of the less strenuous Philistines who occupied the foot-hills and plain between Judea and the sea, the temptation which

* I cannot do my readers a greater kindness than to recommend to them the work of Sir George Adam Smith who has made a profound and illuminating study of the influence of the climate of Palestine upon its inhabitants in Bible times.

periodically assailed the Israelites when at different brief moments they had conquered their more easy living neighbours, to worship the less austere and more sensuous gods of their vanquished foe, made possible, or perhaps even caused the stern, unyielding character of their religion and gave rise to the Prophets who so eloquently denounced them when they fell away from the worship of their own jealous God.

What a surprisingly small land it is too! As we read that Solomon held rule over a people "like the dust of the earth in multitude" and that his wealth "made silver to be nothing accounted of," we imagine something very different from a little princedom the size of Wales, and we find it hard to realize that his capital, so gorgeously described, was situated in one of the most unprofitable and least attractive districts, without a harbour, on the way to nowhere, out of reach of the routes of travel and commerce, and set apart from the intercourse of the nations. Judea, the heart of Palestine, is only forty-five miles long and twelve miles wide; it is also very high, rising in hard limestone ridges that lie horizontally. From these the Israelites looked down, enisled as it were by the deep Jordan Valley, the rocky desert of the Negeb and the sea, upon the fertile lower lands along which the caravans wound their way backwards and forwards from Egypt to Damascus and Mesopotamia. Invaders

from all countries and of all periods spread fear and destruction in the valleys, but generally left Judea alone or came to it, like the Romans, last of all. For geographical historians this isolated situation of the Israelites has a direct relation to the exclusiveness of their spirit. When they "went up" to Jerusalem they could not help feeling separate from the rest of the world. The unobstructed view of the heavens from the ridge of Palestine between the great desert and the great sea corresponded to their inspired idealism, and the barren rocks so difficult to cultivate were a fitting background for the stern and ascetic nature of their doctrine. Judea's rock-born seclusion from the world may well have inspired her people, as Sir George Adam Smith suggests, "with the patriotism that has survived two thousand years of separation and still draws her exiles from the fairest countries of the world to pour tears upon her dust, though it be among the most barren the world contains." The extraordinarily variable and often cruel climate with its earthquakes, its terrific storms of thunder and lightning, its droughts and famines, and then the radiant smile of prosperity that unexpectedly dimples the stern uplands with fair fields of corn and draws across the rocks a coloured veil of brightest flowers, could not but make a people still in the anthropological stage of culture feel that they were in the hands of a liv-

ing God who gave or withheld His favours according to His own good pleasure. To the cry, "Whence cometh my help?" the answer for them could only be, "My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth." Did He send lightning, did He dry up the streams, did He shake the earth, the people were powerless; their industry went for naught without the favour of Jehovah.

The small race, thus tempered and moulded by their isolated and unyielding dwelling-place, possessed, by a miracle no geography can explain, the genius of literature. Their sacred book surpasses in vividness, beauty, and impressiveness, and in sublimity of tone (not always maintained) the consecrated lore of any other race. Those who have explored the dreary wastes of Sanskrit sacred literature—those long dry stretches between a few enchanting oases—those who have sought to follow the mind of Mahomet through his often childish outpourings in the Koran, or have got themselves involved in the mazes of fantastic comment, built up on the few authentic Confucian sayings, cannot but turn with relief to the Old Testament, with its wealth of poetry, its character-drawing, the dramatic as well as tender situations, its outpourings of fiery rhetoric, its occasional sublimely elevated moral tone. It is the miracle of the supreme literature created by this small race which has embalmed their fierce history and their

stern beliefs in words and images beyond compare, and printed them ineffaceably upon our imagination in visions larger than life.

HISTORY OF JERUSALEM

We left Mount Carmel on April 14, a little flock of four motor cars, and made our way across the Plain of Esdraelon, and up the bare stony hills that once were plentifully terraced for vineyards and olive orchards, reaching finally the rocky plateau on which Jerusalem stands, twenty-five hundred feet above sea level. This town demands from the most superficial traveller a certain amount of historical knowledge; even the purest aesthete can scarcely confine himself to looking upon it merely as a picturesque group of semi-oriental buildings pierced with tunnelled streets lined with bazaars full of coloured stuffs of all kinds, fruits, and sweets, and crowded with people in every costume under the sun and speaking every language. It cries out as no other city to be understood in its religious significance and in the historical adventures it has undergone.

The early history of Jerusalem is very misty, but it was a town before the Israelites under Joshua took possession of the land of Canaan. The Jerusalem that we now see is at least the eighth city built upon this ridge; even the Jerusalem of Christ's time is buried deep beneath superimposed

layers of later habitations, and archaeologists are only just beginning to cut down to the level of the town that Jesus saw. David wrested Jerusalem from the Jebuzites about 1000 B.C. and began its embellishment, which his son, Solomon, carried so far that its magnificence became a world fable. Four centuries later Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple and most of the houses, and carried the people captive to Babylon. Which of us does not have echoing in his head the lament of the Israelites beginning, "By the waters of Babylon, there we sat us down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion"? Jerusalem was rebuilt by Nehemiah; and Herod, the great builder, beautified it with many imposing edifices just before the birth of Christ. It was again levelled to the ground by Titus in 70 A.D., and for fifty years there was no city there at all. For several centuries it even lost its name, having been baptized as *Aelia Capitolinus*. But Jerusalem cannot be killed either as idea, name or fact. Invaded and captured, razed and reared again and again, dedicated to one faith after another, to several or to none, ruined by earthquake, by siege, by famine and by disease, it survives all the cataclysms of nature and the destructions of man. Constantine made it a shrine in the fourth century; the Arabs took it in 639 (Jews, Samaritans, and Christians, all welcoming the Moslems as their deliverers from the oppression of

the Byzantines), the Mad Khalif, El Hakim, in 1010, destroying all the Christian churches. The Moslems held it for nearly thirteen hundred years, with an interruption when the Crusaders occupied it from 1099 to 1189, rebuilding many of the churches. They yielded finally to Saladin's superior force. The Turks came to the top in 1517, and it was theirs till Lord Allenby walked into it by the Jaffa gate on December 11, 1917.

Yet among all these chaotic centuries of history, Solomon and his wives, Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon, Rome's imperial eagle, and the Saracen crescent, one figure and one only has impressed itself on the Jerusalem of our imagination, that of a solitary man holding a palm-branch and riding on an ass into the Golden Gate of the City. The glory of Egypt and Greece and Rome pales before the glance of this Jew who was crucified there between two thieves. It is this victim who for us, whatever we may think about Christianity, consecrates the city.

ENTERING JERUSALEM

Jérusalem! mieux que la plus magique description, mieux que les plus artificieuses et vibrantes paroles, ce nom seul emplit l'âme de souvenir et d'émotion.

—P. HUGHES VINCENT

We entered Jerusalem by the Tower from which David looked down upon the beautiful Bathsheba,

and passed through a long stretch of sordid suburbs hiding the old view of the town that gave the Crusaders "much ado to manage so great a gladness." The best way to approach the town would be from the Jordan road that runs under the Mount of Olives and from which Jerusalem rises across the Valley of Jehoshaphat with its terraces and domes, scarcely a single modern building breaking the impression. From the south or west the approach would be a little longer; one would have to take the road twice, turning east on approaching the town, and then turn back at the north shoulder of the Mount of Olives, but it would be amply worth while, for a first impression is apt to determine one's whole attitude towards a town. The tin-can, jerry-built constructions that have been run up in the new quarter to the west of the town, and the pretentious cement buildings of the more opulent inhabitants, among which we passed, are as unfortunate a first impression as could be devised. They are worthy of the hotel to which we were conducted, the Palestinian substitute for a Ritz Hotel where an insipid but elaborate *table d'hôte* was eaten to the sound of jazz music.

THE HOLY SEPULCHRE [3]

By the next morning our dragoman had begun to understand our tastes better than he could at first, and he found for us fairly comfortable rooms

in the more modest hotel of St. John which we had seen when, getting out of our motors on arrival, we hurried down the labyrinth of covered streets for our first and as it turned out our most thrilling glimpse of the Holy Sepulchre. This hotel was so near to the shrine that during the two weeks we spent in Jerusalem we were able to be constantly in and out of the church, but we never recaptured the mysterious and romantic vision of that first visit when the gathering darkness blotted out all the details and gave us only vague shapes dimly apprehended by the twinkle of lamps in the dark interior, while the voices of unseen priests were faintly heard from the dark chapels round about—the deep bass of the Greek, the wail of the Copt, the organ-accompanied drone of the Roman and the subdued cry of the Abyssinian. By daylight the shrine within is seen to be rather tawdry and sordid and dilapidated, but nothing can equal the picturesqueness of the scene that we looked on when we sat, as we often did for hours together, in the courtyard of the Holy Sepulchre, watching the crowd of worshippers going in and out. Greek priests with their hair done up in chignons and their high caps; women from Bethlehem with their tall mediaeval head-dresses dating from a fashion prevalent in Europe in the twelfth century and brought in by the Crusaders; Abyssinians black as ink; white-robed Carmelite monks; Franciscans

in brown; Dominicans in black and white; ecclesiastics from all countries in their robes and finery; Nestorians, Georgians, Maronites; Copts with pale faces and long black beards; Armenians in pointed hoods; veiled women scarcely to be distinguished from Mahometans; tattooed women from Syria in bright gowns, carrying their children sitting on their shoulders; sheiks from the desert wearing their stately camelhair cloaks falling in classic folds over silk garments; less exalted Bedouins of every class dressed in innumerable attires down to mere bundles of rags (all is beautiful in colour, however dirty and torn); all these stream by in endless procession, while pigeons circle about in the blue sky and nest in the fretted traceries of the façade carved by the Crusaders, and, at the appointed hours, overpowering the droning chants that come from within the church, the Muezzin from a minaret overlooking the court, in ringing tones of passionate intensity, calls the faithful to their prayers.[4]

The two bas-reliefs over the doors must have been done by some French sculptor who came with the Crusaders. Even archaeologists of such different schools as M. Deschamps of the Trocadero and Mr. Kingsley Porter of Harvard agree that these sculptures are strongly Burgundian in character. The relief over the west portal, of which a small section has been carried away to the Louvre, repre-

sents the story of Lazarus and Christ's entry into Jerusalem.[5] That over the east portal is a beautiful decorative design, perhaps symbolical, of foliage, fruit, flowers, birds, and nude figures. The church began as a basilica, but the Templars built a round temple in the middle, imitating the big mosque near by which they mistakenly took for the Jewish Temple. That the present circular temple surrounding the Shrine of the Tomb occupies the same space as the original Templar church is more than probable, but the effect of the decaying plaster which masks the iron ribs of the architecture is very different from that of the gorgeous mosaics which, we have reason to believe, once decorated the whole interior. Of these there is only a trace left, seldom seen by the tourist, in the Chapel of the Agony of the Virgin which stands at the top of a little staircase on the left part of the façade. In character this bit of mosaic is very close to the mosaics in the Mosque of the Dome.

When you recover from the first disappointment of the tawdry and crowded interior, you can find there many beautiful scattered fragments of the antique and of fine twelfth-century French sculpture. There is, for example, a rectangular part of the church which was built by the French between 1140 and 1149, its pointed windows, clustered pillars, and groined vaulting now incongru-

ously mingled with Arab details. This church is supposed to occupy the site of the garden of Joseph of Arimathea. There is also, in the Chapel of St. Helena—now belonging to the Armenians—a dome borne by four antique monoliths of red granite which were supposed to shed tears.

I have dreaded coming to this part of my narrative, but I may as well confess, once for all, that I felt saddened rather than inspired in this holiest building on earth, with its innumerable shrines commemorating the scenes of sacred history. One is shown, all crowded together, the altar of Melchizedec, the chapels of the Archangel Michael, St. Mary of Egypt, St. James, St. Thecla, St. Mary Magdalen, the Forty Martyrs, the chapel where Christ appeared to His Mother after His Resurrection, not to mention the Stone of Unction on which the body of Jesus was laid to be anointed and the other stone where the women stood to watch the anointing, the Tomb of Christ, of Joseph of Arimathea, of Nicodemus, the room where Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalen, the column of the Scourging (an alternative version is shown in the Church of Santa Prassede at Rome), the prison of Christ with His footprints impressed on a stone, Golgotha with the cleft in the rock which reaches the centre of the earth, the chapel where Adam was buried, the relics of Godfrey of Bouillon, and so on and on. In this whole assemblage of apocry-

phal sights with the never-ending procession of pilgrims of different sects, Latin, Greek Abyssinian, Coptic, Syrian, and even Anglican, the greatest miracle of it all seemed to me to be that anybody could believe in its divine significance.

Had we stayed for the Greek Easter (which we carefully avoided) with its reputed "miracle" of the fire self-generated at the reputed Tomb of Christ, my unfortunate attitude would, I fear, have only been accentuated. We were told that as many as eight thousand people crowd into that not very large space, some of them, especially the Copts, keeping their places there, with all their families, from Holy Thursday to Easter Monday. It is believed that a child born in the church during that time will be exceptionally fortunate through all its life; hence expectant mothers near their term congregate there, and often, in the excitement, the wished-for birth takes place on the floor or on the steps of some altar. The noise, the filth cannot be imagined. Our Franciscan guide said it took fully two weeks to free the shrine from the dirt and the reek of that enormous crowd. It is considered a very blessed and fortunate Easter when no one is crushed to death in the crowd, or deliberately killed by some rival fanatic. Those who visited Jerusalem before the English mandate used to be struck by the sad and significant fact that it was Moslem guardians (now assisted

by soldiers in khaki) who kept the peace of the place (what peace there was) between the warring Christian sects who thronged the church. Eventually it was the quarrel over the keys of the Holy Sepulchre between the Catholics—represented by France, who claimed them as representatives of Charlemagne, the Champion of Christianity—and the Russians, who claimed them by virtue of Omar's grant to Constantinople, that brought on the war which ended at Sebastopol.[6]

HARAM ES-SHERIF

I turn with relief to one of the indisputably greatest achievements of art in the world, namely, the Dome of the Rock,[7] the dignified shrine of an alien cult, held by the Mahometans second only to Mecca in sacredness. In the face of such beauty archaeology seems almost misplaced, and yet mere descriptions of beauty are always inadequate and tend to be cloying. I should like to say nothing about it except, "Go and see it, and go again." But I know that even we, who have exercised ourselves as few people have in the enjoyment of the beauty created by man, interspersed our periods of appreciating its beauty with the devout reading of Baedeker and more recondite authorities, so I permit myself to set down some reflections and what information seemed most interesting on the spot.

One thinks of other great sites, the Acropolis of Athens, the Piazzas of St. Mark's and of St. Peter's, the Church of St. James at Santiago and its surroundings, the lovely cathedral closes in England, the grassy space on which the Cathedral, the Baptistery, the Campo Santo and the Leaning Tower of Pisa stand, of the broad terrace on the green slopes of the Guardarrama where rises the Escorial, that great monument to the genius of the architect Herrera and the piety of Philip II, but this is more exotic, more unspoiled, and it is the largest of them all, covering thirty-five acres of artificially terraced and levelled ground. As sheer constructive architecture the Mosques of Sinan at Constantinople and Adrianople are perhaps grander, but none of them has this marvellous man-constructed site—nor the colour.

Our first visit, the morning after our arrival, was an experience never to be forgotten. We walked down and down through the picturesque and crowded streets and the covered bazaar, noting many relics of earlier structures built into walls, passing doorways and windows and balconies of delicate Arab tracery, antique columns, broken lines of grand Hellenistic masonry, and all the interesting remains of a much destroyed and frequently rebuilt city, and reached at last the arches of the great west arcade that gives onto the platform of the Dome. Through these openings we

got our first glimpse of the Blue Mosque and of the two flights of steps leading up to it, surmounted by graceful arches and flanked by slender colonnades. When we reached the top steps we looked abroad on the great empty spaces of the platform, dotted here and there with lovely little shrines, framed in on the north by a series of small domed buildings with delicately arched porches, and running down by the steps on the south to the grassy field that leads to the Mosque of El Aksa. On the east we saw these same green fields bounded by the crenellated walls which shut in the whole place from the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The stones of the walls, of the platform and of the small Arab domed buildings upon it (for private devotion, ceremonial washing, tombs of saints, and so on) which decorate the space without crowding it or destroying the sense of peaceful amplitude, are of a warm ivory and pearl colour which is well set off by occasional clumps of dark cypresses and the silver olive. I doubt if the Temple of Herod, which the mosque replaces, or Solomon's Temple before it, could have produced a more convincing impression of splendour and sobriety, majesty and aloofness than this place. Its only rival is the Acropolis of Athens, but that in its prime must have been sadly overcrowded with statues. The platform of the mosque is so huge and so discreetly built upon, that one feels alone there in

spite of the many groups of people who sit on the grass or straggle up to the shrine. The grave repose of the place is a great contrast to the clashing of the sects and the demonstrations of the pious in the Holy Sepulchre.

As to the cult there practised, I could take it peacefully. The religion of Islam is not mine; I never come across anything but the picturesque side; no one that I know argues that the Mahometan Faith is the True Faith; the people I care about do not prostrate themselves in that absurd and revolting attitude with their foreheads on the floor and the less honoured part of their persons sticking up; I am not forced to concern myself about all that, and am far enough away from it to be calm about the Arab conquest and about the defects of the votaries of the Mahometan religion. So the vision of the Dome of the Rock was not alloyed with any sense of personal responsibility; I was free to yield myself to those mystical and soothing semi-historical, semi-cosmic emotions of *Weltschmertz* and pathos to which the faint lovely traces of ruin and decay open the heart. There was absolutely nothing to disturb one's mood.

THE BLUE MOSQUE

The first thing that strikes one about the mosque is the general effect of the coloured tiles that cover

the exterior, which give the edifice the name of Blue Mosque. This beautiful colour is enhanced by its contrast with the ivory pavement around it and by the stately and graceful shape of the building, a flat-roofed octagon surmounted by a dome resting on a hexagonal drum.

There is a little shrine outside the east door of the mosque which seems to belong to the same period as the large building. It is called the Dome of the Chain and is supposed to be the site of David's Seat of Judgment. Moslems believe that a chain once stretched across the entrance, put there by Solomon (or God Himself even), and that the truthful witness could grasp it without any result, whereas a link fell off if the chain was held by a perjurer. The columns have been taken from an older building and are in the Byzantine style, the floor is covered with beautiful patterns of stone mosaic. This little building produces an effect of space composition which recalls Raphael's "Sposalizio."

I shall permit myself here to indulge in a bit of the archaeology of the place,[8] for the Dome is almost the only spot in Jerusalem where archaeology is connected with great beauty. We did not fail to follow, all over the town, under the guidance of the learned Franciscan priest, Father Baldi, the findings of Christian archaeology, and, if eloquence and knowledge could make dead bones live,

Father Baldi would have made us as enthusiastic about this matter as we became about the great Haram es-Sherif. But it was no use! We saw Holy Places; heard on the spot the results of the latest investigations; we pored over the three volumes of the incredibly learned and careful Fathers Vincent and Abel, who may be taken to have said the last word on these matters (with the slight bias that religious belief inevitably gives to even its most scholarly votaries); but archaeology without beauty fades quickly from the mind—at least from my mind—and the only hope of anything being permanently held in that leaky mental vessel which I call my memory is to have it associated with some object of visible beauty.

The Dome of the Rock, while remaining first of all a vision of incomparable loveliness, has historical and traditional associations which no one can avoid. I cannot call up every one, so I have taken my own feelings as guide, mentioning the things that for me deepened the interest and enhanced the romance of the spot and omitting the episodes and facts that left me indifferent.

The mosque appears to have been built on the site, more or less, of Solomon's Temple on Mount Moriah.[9] This building has utterly vanished, with its pillars of brass and the brazen sea, with all its stones quarried and dressed by eighty thousand

workmen and its timbers of cedar, fir, and cypress from Mount Lebanon employing a hundred thousand men in their cutting and transport, the workmen being probably captives of war or conquered natives. I wish at least that the bronze serpent made by Moses had been preserved, but it had become an object of idolatry, and when Hezekiah purified the Temple he had it broken to pieces. Razed to the ground by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., when the Jews were carried captive to Babylon, their Holy Shrine lived on in their tenacious spirits, and when Cyrus permitted their return, they began to rebuild it, though less sumptuously. "The young men shouted for joy to think there would once again be a Temple at Jerusalem, while the old men, who had been carried away fifty years before, wept when they remembered the magnificence of the building that had vanished."[10] Its subsequent history was very varied. Again and again it was used for pagan cults, or it fell into neglect and decay. Its desecration reached the climax when, under Antiochus, swine were offered on the altar as sacrifice. That day, the twenty-fifth of the month Kislen, 168 B.C., is still remembered with horror by Jews all over the world who on its anniversary celebrate in the "Festival of the Lights" the purification of the Temple and its rededication to Jehovah by Judas Maccabaeus, when, exactly three years later, he again lighted

the Temple lamps. No traces of this building remain, for Herod in 20 B.C. pulled it down to make place for a magnificent Temple in the Hellenistic style.[11] Of this little remains except the substructure now known as the "Wailing Wall," and the base of the south wall of the enclosure, for Titus destroyed it in the year 70, Hadrian in 131 ordered a large Temple to Jupiter to be put in its place. There is no mention of this building save by Dion Cassius, whose text is admittedly corrupt. Hence it has been questioned whether it was ever really built. The whole matter will be fully discussed by Mr. K. A. C. Creswell, in his remarkable book, *Early Muslim Architecture*. The "Bordeaux Pilgrim" (A.D. 333) speaks of two statues of Hadrian there and a stone to which the Jews came to weep.[12]

There is much discussion as to the buildings that subsequently occupied the site, but when the Khalif Omar sought it out in 637, nothing was left but heaps of stones and refuse thrown there by the Christians in abhorrence, no doubt, of the attempt Julian made to rebuild the Temple for the Jews. The following account of Omar's visit to the site is given by an early writer, Shams ed-Din es Suyuti, a tale, he says, handed down in the family of an Arab who was present on the occasion *:

* From Colonel Sir Charles Watson, K. C. M. G., C. B., *The Story of Jerusalem* (E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1912; J. M. Dent & Son, London, 1912).

Then Omar, as soon as he was at leisure from the writing of the treaty of the capitulation between him and the people of the Holy City, said to the patriarch of Jerusalem, "Conduct us to the Mosque of David." And the patriarch agreed thereto. Then Omar went forth girt with his sword, and four thousand of the companions who had come to Jerusalem with him, all begirt likewise with their swords, and a crowd of us Arabs, who had come up to the Holy City, followed them, none of us bearing any weapons except our swords. And the patriarch walked before Omar among the Companions, and we all behind the Khalif. Thus we entered the Holy City. And the patriarch took us to the church which goes by the name of the Kumameh (i.e. the Holy Sepulchre), and said he, "This is David's Mosque." And Omar looked around and pondered; then he answered the patriarch, "Thou liest, for the Apostle described to me the Mosque of David, and, by his description, this is not it." Then the patriarch went on with us to a church called that of Sion, and again he said, "This is the Mosque of David." But the Khalif replied to him, "Thou liest." So the patriarch went on with him till he came to the Noble Sanctuary (i.e. the Haram enclosure) of the Holy City and reached the gate thereof, called the Gate of Mahomed. Now the rubbish which was then all about the Noble Sanctuary had settled on the steps of this gate, so that it even came out into the street when the gate opened, and it had accumulated so greatly on the steps as almost to reach up to the ceiling of the gateway. The patriarch said to Omar, "It is impossible to proceed and enter, except crawling on the hands and knees." Then said Omar, "Even on

hands and knees be it." So the patriarch went down on hands and knees, preceding Omar, and we all crawled after him, until he had brought us out into the court of the Noble Sanctuary of the Holy City. Then we arose off our knees and stood upright. And Omar looked round, pondering for a long time. Then he said, "By Him in whose hands is my soul! this is the place described to us by the Apostle of Allah." [18]

It is said that the Rock spoke a greeting to Omar when he made his way through the rubbish to the place where the Temple had stood, where afterwards rose the shrine whose ghost still lingers on in the many times rebuilt and repaired Blue Mosque.

But it appears that the popular name, "Mosque of Omar," given by the Crusaders, is incorrect. Omar only put up a temporary wooden mosque and the present one owes its origin to the Caliph Abd el-Melek about half a century later (A.D. 691). This mosque, several times restored, was used as a church by the Crusaders when, at the end of the eleventh century, they occupied Jerusalem. Imagining that it was the original Temple of Solomon, the Templars took it as their model and in imitation of it erected not only the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, but a number of churches in Europe, such as the Templars' Church in London, and those in Segovia, Laon, Metz, Aix-la-Chapelle and elsewhere.

If the Crusaders thrilled me as much as the rest of the history with which this spot is connected I should have a great deal to say about the hundred years during which they held it. But the heroes of that time, their aims and ideals, are so tarnished with incompetence, muddle, sordid ambition, avarice and senseless courage that I cannot bear to linger over them.[14] Saladin drove them from the field, and the mosque was reclaimed for the followers of Mahomet, who still congregate there for prayer and worship. From that time until a few decades ago it was strictly shut to non-Moslems. Many of the earlier pilgrims never mention it at all. Lamartine, even, could only see it from the Mount of Olives across the valley, and Chateaubriand got a mere glimpse of it from a window in the house of Pilate. But the tolerance which is inculcated by the Koran and which was practised by the early Khalifs (so far in advance of the practice of the numerous sects of Eastern Christians) permitted the annual procession of Christian pilgrims to visit all their own Holy Places in the town and allowed the Greeks to retain possession of their churches and convents. Hence the stream of Western pilgrimages to Jerusalem was never intermitted, and we have many records of adventures of travellers who took part in them.

On one of our subsequent visits to the mosque we had the pleasure of being shown the tiles on

the outside (which have replaced the original mosaics) by Mr. Ernest Richmond, the consultant architect of the building.[15] He told us that the tiles belong to six main periods, the enamelled ones of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries; glazed tiles of the middle of the sixteenth century; glazed imported tiles of a kind known as Rhodian of the seventeenth century; tiles of eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; and imported tiles of recent date. The present tile covering is a patchwork of many periods. The oldest and by far the most interesting and beautiful are chiefly in the protected parts under the lidded cornice dividing the drum from the dome. The colour effect in these tiles is, as Mr. Richmond writes, "strong, almost violent; the drawing is decided. The design is made to tell at a distance." These old tiles have been reset and readjusted and reduced by chiselling, but I single them out for special mention because once the attention of the lover of beauty is called to them, he will see that they are the finest, although the later ones have merits of their own. The colours used are dark blue, turquoise, yellow, black, and green, with geometric lines in white; the ground is a dark blue alternating with black. It is amusing to pick them out from the places where they have been scattered about by various restorations, in the octagon, under the arches, around the windows of the cupola and

below the great inscription that once ran all the way round the drum. Once the whole building (except the lower part which was always of marble) was covered with glass mosaics of Byzantine character and the cupola (now of lead) was carried out in gilded copper.

Entering the mosque itself we found an interior surpassed in gorgeousness of colour and mystery of lighting by no other shrine, not even St. Mark's itself. A series of circular enclosures are set one within the other, so disposed that the columns and piers do not conceal one another but permit you a view of the whole from almost any part of the building. The cupola in the middle is upheld by a high cylindrical wall which is entirely covered with mosaics of flower and vase patterns in which blue and green prevail, enhanced by the gold background, by the discreet use of black and brown, and by the mother-of-pearl inlay introduced into the pattern. The arches and the upper section of the piers of the colonnade of the middle enclosure are also gleaming with mosaic.[16] The windows are filled with coloured sixteenth-century glass set in heavy stuccoed patterns. The walls of the outer structure are covered with marble and the pavement is tessellated with coloured stones. The columns carrying the cupola, and those that stand between the piers of the middle enclosure, are of varied antique marbles, and a gilded cornice unites

them. This crowded complex of structural forms gives by contrast an appearance of immense spaciousness to the central area under the cupola, where the Rock is enclosed by a beautiful gilded iron screen from the time of the Crusaders.

Our first visit was taken up in absorbing the general effect of solemn splendour. We sat on different projections, the bases of columns and marble benches, till the Moslem hour of worship drew near and we were obliged to go out again onto the broad platform which carries the mosque. Here we were struck with the Carpaccio effect of the great enclosure with its small auxiliary domed buildings, its colonnades, its groups of brightly attired Eastern pilgrims bathed in translucent light. Except that there was more space and less crowd, it recalled the backgrounds of piazzas and buildings in Carpaccio's St. Stephen series. But we were not allowed to linger on to enjoy this rare beauty, for by 11:30 o'clock every visitor must leave the site. This, I must say, gave rise to so much rage in the soul of my husband that he could not refrain from expressing it vehemently to our friend in the secretariat, Mr. Antonius. Nicky and I, with feminine tact and submissiveness, would have endured the restrictions in patience, and we exchanged glances of anxiety when we heard the reproaches heaped upon the English powers that permitted such an outrage on tourists. However,

the storm seemed to have a salutary effect, for we received, shortly after, an invitation to spend the whole afternoon in the Haram es-Sherif. We thus had the great privilege of lingering till evening and enjoying the different and ever more beautiful effects of light and shadow, and the great mosque, blue against a pink and saffron sunset sky. Mr. Antonius was with us and presented us to the Grand Mufti, the hereditary Moslem Bishop, so to speak, of Palestine. He was a courteous, handsome man, with a white turban tightly wound round a red cap, an auburn beard, yellow, observant eyes, and an inscrutable smile faintly playing about his well-cut lips. His appearance suggested a portrait by Gentile Bellini or Catena. He said that he would see if some arrangement could be arrived at by which real students should, at any rate sometimes, be able to come into the Haram in the afternoon. The place at that hour is like a sedate picnic ground, with groups of Moslem women sitting round under the trees chatting while their children play about on the grass, but the spread of the platform is so immense that the figures decorate but do not crowd it. Human life seems hushed and dignified in such a grand setting.

We had plenty of leisure to visit the now closed-up Golden Gate in the middle of the west wall of the enclosure—and this was also one of the great aesthetic experiences of our trip. You descend a

flight of steps and are at once caught in the mighty grasp of Antiquity. You have great monolithic pillars with acanthus capitals, an arched vaulting borne by a large central pillar, and a powerful but exquisitely sculptured frieze, and above all you have the antique size and proportions, the Greek reasonableness, the Roman majesty.

We were invited to take tea in the apartment of the Grand Mufti, which is situated above a part of the west colonnade looking out on the mosque. Under the setting sun the Blue Dome began to add violet and purple hues to its turquoise surface. We sat about on the usual divans that furnish an Arab sitting-room and were offered small cups of that delicious though bitter Arab coffee scented with cardamon seeds. This we profoundly appreciated, but when it came to the pastry which our polite host had had specially prepared for us, a conflict arose between our palates and our good manners, for the pastry was glazed with the mutton fat that for us ruins all the cookery of the Near East, fat taken from the huge tails of the sheep which are greatly prized among people whose religion causes them to abjure pork.

MOSQUE OF EL AKSA

We spent several mornings also in the Mosque of El Aksa, which is on a lower terrace to the south within the Sherif enclosure. To this spot

God brought the Prophet Mahomet from Mecca in one night. As to its human origins there is less certainty; it was probably an early basilica judging by its shape and the capitals of the columns, and it may well have been erected by the Emperor Justinian. It was converted into a mosque by Omar and has since then been very much altered and pulled about. The palatial porch has almost the stately magnificence of that great Romanesque Church of San Clemente at Casauria in the Abruzzo. The impressive vaults on which it stands are called the stables of King Solomon, and here the pilgrims were sheltered during the years when Jerusalem was in the hands of the Crusaders. We were very much struck by some of the exquisite floral sculpture on a monument of the time of the Crusaders built into the wall to the right of the choir. The frail acanthus leaves seemed to tremble in the breeze. Evidently the sculptor spent some time in Jerusalem, for we discovered his work on a pulpit to the left of the steps coming up to the Dome from the El Aksa Mosque, and also on a monument, looking like an altar, in the Dome itself, and then again in the Church of theHoly Sepulchre. His touch is very delicate and unmistakable.

LEGENDS OF THE ROCK

But what drew us back over and over again were the mosaics in the Dome. Nowhere is decoration

more complete and gorgeous, and nowhere perhaps has legend gathered more persistently than around the Holy Rock, *Kubbet es-Sahra,* which lies beneath it, being for the mosque what the Tomb of Christ is for the Holy Sepulchre. To the uninstructed eye it is a low, crude and shapeless dark-coloured stone ("58 ft. long and 44 wide" according to Baedeker), but to the eye of faith it is one of the most sacred objects on earth. Mahometans believe that, suspended in the air, it hovers over the abyss of the roaring waters of the flood, or rests upon a palm watered by the rivers of Paradise, or else that it is the Gate of Hell. One prayer here was declared by Mahomet to be better than a thousand anywhere else. He himself, having in one night ridden from Mecca to Jerusalem on el-Burak, his magic steed with the human face, was translated to Heaven from a spot a little to the right of the Rock. The impression of his head is still shown, and also the mark of the angel's hand which held back the Rock from following him. On this occasion the Rock spoke.

Jewish and Christian legend, sitting upon every possible horn of every possible dilemma, recognize this rock as the Altar of Melchizedec, and the place where Abraham brought Isaac to sacrifice him; it is the Rock which Jacob anointed; the great Altar of Burnt Sacrifice; the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant stood; the spot on

which the Angel alighted to threaten Jerusalem. There Jesus was brought by His parents and stayed behind to dispute with the Doctors. It is also said that He discovered the great and unspeakable Name of God written on the Rock which gave him the power to perform miracles. All agree that it is the centre of the world, although I have heard, also, that this was otherwise determined by Job when he built the Great Pyramid at Cairo.

But I am straying too far away from my narrative, overcome by the history, real and legendary, of this fascinating place. I must banish the somewhat vague visions of Solomon and Saladin, of the Templars, of the Sultans Beybars, Keitbey, and Kalaun from Egypt, and of all the earthquakes, destructions, rebuildings, pilgrimages, and miracles that have centred there. They are not personal impressions, except in so far as reading creates a background for observation and feeling, and for each traveller the background here must be partly a personal matter. No one mind and imagination could possibly exhaust the endless associations of this immortal shrine.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

I will only mention one more of the many spots which, with the Dome of the Rock and the Holy Sepulchre, stand out among the places hallowed by history and religion, as a special goal of aesthetic

travel. For it was there that I became consciously aware of the inner meaning and purport of our modern pilgrimage. We tried in vain to summon up the feelings that should be evoked by a visit to the Garden of Gethsemane, but in the end had to leave them to our religious friends who knelt in a fervour of piety on the floor of the large new church built there, which, though following on old architectural lines, offended us so deeply by the dead, mechanical touch of the modern builders and by the blatant and execrable (though very costly) mosaics in the interior, that all gentle emotions were drowned. We escaped into the garden, but to no avail. Some of the olives, it is true, were old and gnarled and beautiful in their contortions as only olive trees can be, but the Italian Fathers had set them in a garden so tasteless and pitiful that it would have disgraced even a suburban Italian villa—than which, up to that moment, I had known no more sordid setting for flowers and plants. Sadly we made our unworthy way up the side of the Mount of Olives, and presently our souls were uplifted and our hearts filled with joy. For turning to look back across the Valley of Jehoshaphat to the long golden wall supporting the platform of the great mosque and its gleaming blue cupola, with the flat roofs and close packed domes of the town threaded by the dark crevasses of the streets rising behind it, we recovered the

Jerusalem implanted in our earliest memories by descriptions, by engravings, by the backgrounds of Fra Angelico and the primitive painters of all Christian lands—a vision beautiful in itself and hung with the radiance of the imagination of childhood. Here was *our* Jerusalem, the goal of the new pilgrim for whom, with the failure of the older faiths, the worship of beauty is becoming the only possible form of religion and is acquiring the sanctity and the power of bestowing holiness and salvation on its votaries and pilgrims. I realized then that an element of the old pilgrimage-spirit lingers on in the modern sight-seer—he, too, feels that he acquires merit and a kind of holiness by visiting sacred places—sacred for their beauty and the poetry of their associations.

When we climbed to the top of the ridge our eyes encountered one of the most sacred scenes the pilgrim of today can gaze upon—the distant blue mountains of Moab falling sharply to the Valley of the Jordan, and the bare twisted hills and mounds of this terrifying earth-chasm in their way mirroring the sky almost as the Dead Sea, which they hold in their bosom, mirrors the heavens and the mountains in its turquoise blue waters. Perhaps I should keep silent about the miracle that lay at our feet, for the view is marvellous when it bursts quite unexpectedly upon one (as it did upon us) through the silver of the olives and be-

tween the stems of the cypresses. But I may justify my indiscretion by recommending the garden of the hideous building put up by the German Emperor and now used as a hospital, or the furthermost terrace of the Russian Convent, as incomparable places for the opening of a tea-basket and sitting down in the modern way to enter into communion with the landscape and enjoy a view that has no rival.

VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT

We returned to Jerusalem again through the ghostly Valley of the Kedron, called the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which contains thousands of Jewish graves as well as many Moslem tombs. According to the picturesque belief of the Jews and Moslems, it is in the Valley of Jehoshaphat that the Last Judgment will take place. On that solemn day Christ will sit on the Wall of the Haram, Mahomet on the Mount of Olives opposite, and between them a single hair will be stretched across the valley, upon which the multitudes assembled will have to pass. The hills will draw back and the valley will open down to Hell itself, but the righteous will walk across without fear, secure in the belief that if they falter their guardian angels will hold them up by their forelocks. Finally only those will be left who are afraid to venture themselves upon so narrow a bridge. Mahomet

enquires why they linger and is told that they are the wicked Moslems whose sins make them afraid and who are anxiously waiting to know the Prophet's will concerning them. At first stern and reproachful, he presently begins to smile to himself, and quickly crosses over from his side and appears among them clad as a shepherd in a sheepskin coat with the woolly side out. He waves his hand and the repentant sinners are turned into fleas, who hop onto him and bury themselves in the wool of his coat, and are thus carried by him across the bridge to join their companions in the Moslem's heaven.

THE SPIRITUAL TENSION OF JERUSALEM

Thy silver has become dross; thy wine mixed with water. —ISAIAH

I hope I shall do nobody wrong to speak what I think, and deserve not blame in imparting my mind. If it be not for thy ease, it may be for my own.
—BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy*

I have telescoped our two visits to Jerusalem, which in memory seem one; for our afternoon trips to Ramleh, Bethlehem, Hebron and so on, and even our excursion across the Jordan, did not break the thread of associations and feelings any more than dreams break into the continuity of waking existence. Without being aware of it, one's mind and heart are kept at a very high tension in

that centre of clashing religions, of ancient and modern life, of high ideals and low practice, of spiritual ecstasy and moral discomfort. Jerusalem has been, almost ever since history began, the aim of varied human striving. It is the point of highest projection of religious emotion, the spiritual goal of the whole white race, Jews and Christians, and of Mahometans of all colours and all nationalities. Today an old enthusiasm has been revived and is no longer mere aspiration but a practical fact. The New Zionists have erected an enormous Hebrew College on the Mount of Olives where young Jews may go to learn in a strange hybrid language the latest discoveries of science, while still the old traditional Jews beat their foreheads against the Wailing Wall across the valley. Mahometans still prostrate themselves in the shrine built round the rock from which the founder of their religion ascended to his paradise of houris, and great pilgrimages of Mahometans who abhor the Jews and would gladly exterminate them, start with the blessing of the Grand Mufti from the Gate of St. Stephen to make an annual pilgrimage to the tomb of Moses, the great Jewish leader. A never-ending stream of Christian pilgrims pours on foot through the streets too steep for wheeled traffic, while outside the gates motors hoot their way through the modern town, and the Zionists, like people in a

post-hypnotic slavery, put up their barrack-like houses and imagine that they are helping to realize the prophecies made to their forefathers.

But more than this, the contrast goes on in one's own spirit. It shatters the soul to despise what one adores—and who should not adore humanity worshipping its ideal? It hurts to laugh at what wrings the heart with tenderness. It is not easy to keep hold of the frail Ariadne clue of reason through such a labyrinth of emotion; resistance to the contagion of feeling seems ungenerous and small-minded. It racks the heart to feel superior and inferior at the same time, to be exasperated and touched by the same spectacle, to ridicule what is pathetic, to deplore what one longs to worship, and reprove what one longs to admire. It was seldom that I caught glimpses of a quiet, dispassionate attitude towards the whole thing that would enable one to follow appreciatively the development of Christianity from its early Jewish-Messianic origins into the beautiful and universal myth it became—the most wonderful work of art of the human race.

CHAPTER IV

EXCURSIONS FROM JERUSALEM

THE first afternoon after our arrival at Jerusalem we motored along the Jaffa road, but not all the way, so that we did not see the place where Perseus rescued Andromeda and St. George the Princess, nor where the senseless story of Jonah was enacted. However, alternative sites had already been pointed out to us near Beirut. We only turned aside to see and linger at the beautiful Tower and the Crusaders' church at Ramleh, where the Crusaders first arrived in 1099, formed a bishopric, and thence marched on to conquer Jerusalem. Richard Coeur de Lion made it his headquarters, and it was here that St. George was first declared the patron saint of England. Ramleh (in spite of St. George!) was twice captured by Saladin, and finally, in 1226, the Egyptian Sultan Beybars gained possession of it. The Tower rises in a large square enclosed by the arches of ruined cloisters, its golden, graceful storeys seen against the blue mountains of Judea on the one hand and the gleaming Mediterranean on the other. The architecture is clearly of the crusad-

ing period. Standing alone there almost intact (for it was built so solidly that neither earthquakes nor the violence of man have been able to ruin it through all the centuries), with the ruins of the church and cloisters at its feet and the forecourt turned into a straggling orchard of olives, nothing left of the rival religions that once worshipped there, and only goats cropping the grass and lizards darting in and out of the ruined masonry, this tower is one of the most *stimmungsvoll* of all the ruins we visited in Palestine. The solitude and mood were accentuated by the unkempt graveyard that toppled its stones just outside the precincts. One could linger there the whole day, watching the clouds drifting past behind the Tower, and the evening light throwing a rosy hue over the golden stones, but we had our Baedeker with us, and it prophesied a twelfth-century Crusaders' church, now turned into a mosque, in the town of Ramleh. With the usual alluring description of that traveller's *vade mecum* it said that the building was fifty-five yards long and fifty-seven wide, so we dragged ourselves away from the romantic Tower to verify the prophecy. We found to reward us some beautiful capitals inside the church and a fine bit of Arabic bas-relief on what remains of the entrance tower, bearing the impress of the style of Beybars.

The *Stimmung* of the Ramleh Tower was even

surpassed by what we were plunged into when our sympathetic dragoman turned us off the beaten track to a newly excavated ruin at Amwas (supposed to be the Biblical Emmaus). The building is fairly well preserved up to the cornice, and it was evidently an early Christian church built with the great stones and splendid masonry of the Roman period, all in pale golden brown colour, delightful to the eye and satisfactory to the sense of solidity and permanence. Before us the fields sloped down between enclosing hills to the plain of Sharon. The ground was newly ploughed and of a deep brown colour, and here and there husbandmen in turbans and long draperies were turning up the clods with their primitive ploughs pulled by camels and donkeys harnessed together. The sun drawing down, the hills began to shut in the slopes with violet shadows, and the evening calls of the birds sounded faintly in the still air.

ABU GHÔSH

Although the twilight was coming on, we stopped at the impressive Crusaders' church at the village of Abu Ghôsh, around which, in a garden where the little owls onomatopoetically called "Boombo," the original owls of Athena, were beginning to utter their strange cry. Here the learned Benedictines have arranged all the capitals, columns and other relics found near

by. The courteous and intelligent Father who did the honours held the taper up to some frescoes fading on the wall, but we could only appreciate what they were when he showed us, under a more brilliant light, some very excellent copies that had been made of them. They appear to be thirteenth-century Byzantine frescoes.

HEBRON

The next excursion we made was to Hebron, a run of twenty-three miles through the heart of Judea where the desolate heaps of stones crowning the hills and encumbering the valleys are all that is left of the once fenced cities and towns and villages of former times. Here and there the mud huts and low stone walls of the Arab hamlets, half melting into the surrounding rocks, decorate the landscape with unconscious art. Hebron is the reputed place of Adam's creation and of his death, the land of Abraham's election, and the home of Isaac and Jacob. For seven years it was David's capital and then the headquarters of David's rebellious and beloved son, Absalom. It lies south of Jerusalem at a somewhat higher level (3,000 feet). A modern village seems to be rapidly growing on the slopes that surround the ancient city pool, peaceful looking now, but once the scene of David's savage revenge upon his enemies, described in the Book of Samuel, when he "com-

manded his young men and they slew them, and cut off their hands and feet and hanged them up over the pool of Hebron." We were struck by the prosperous look of the houses and of the agriculture in the surrounding fields, where the big stretches of arable soil contrast with the tiny terraces among the rocks near Jerusalem. Their method of cultivating grapes for wine—the "golden wine" of Hebron is famous—struck us as peculiar, for the vines trail flat along the ground looking like big twisting worms. This system we found later in full force in Syria, and, towards the end of May, when the grapes were beginning to form, we noticed that all the vines were being propped up, one by one, on crossed wooden sticks about a foot from the ground.

The chief sight at Hebron is, of course, the mosque,[1] which takes the place of the old Byzantine basilica that itself had been rebuilt under the Crusaders. Yet the great aesthetic interest is not so much the mosque itself as the magnificent walls which surround it, dating, probably, from the first century B.C., put up under Herod the Great. The beautiful golden blocks of which these walls are built are bevelled in a way which we ended by believing to be of Syrian origin, and which may go back to Phoenician tradition. The edges of the blocks are cut away and smoothed off, leaving the middle part projecting and rather rougher. These

walls were the first of the kind that we saw, although afterwards we found them under the enclosure of the Blue Mosque at Jerusalem with the Jews wailing against them, and elsewhere in many ruins all over Syria. A building like this, with bevelled masonry ornamented with shallow pilasters on the wall, is in strange contrast to what most people go to Hebron for, namely, to stand over the site of the Cave of Macphelah which was bought by Abraham for a family burying place. In it he and Sarah were interred, Jacob made Joseph swear to take his body to be laid there, and Isaac, Rebecca, and Leah are all said to be buried in the place. But the cave, under the mosque, is no longer visible and has not been entered for many years. The Mahometan guide showed us Mahomet's footprints in one of the stones. In even greater contrast to the noble severity of the walls is the group of Jews who wail here with more abandon than do their brothers at Jerusalem. From a distance it sounded like the ravings of a madhouse, and when we began to climb the steps to the mosque we had to pass a shrieking, agitated mass, yelling in passionate grief, real or conventional, throwing their bodies and their fur-capped, long-curled heads about in every conceivable contortion, and pushing each other in the endeavour to approach a large stone with a hole in it which they believe goes down to the cave and through

which they crush papers inscribed with their own names or with prayers. The Mahometan guardians of the mosque only allow them to carry on in this way on the first seven steps of the stairway leading to the door of the mosque. It was touching to see an old man who was so lost in his dream and his emotion (and who was perhaps also in his dotage) that he could not keep within the limit, but kept climbing up to find a free space where he could beat his forehead. Always thrust back by the guardians, he returned again and again, his aged face with its flowing white beard contorted in spasms of grief, and his mild eyes looking in a puzzled way at those who kept pushing him down into the boisterous crowd.

ABRAHAM'S OAK

We stopped for the inevitable tea-drinking at a great pine grove near the huge old ilex, the "Oak of Mamre" which, according to early Jewish and Byzantine tradition, shaded the tent where Abraham received the visit of the three angels. Another legend from the third century would have it that this tree sprouted from the rod of one of the angels and that, like the Burning Bush, it could burst into flame without being consumed. Little is left of the ruins of the great temple built there, probably under Hadrian, but never quite finished, and changed by Constantine into a Christian basil-

ica in order to put a stop to the heathen worship of the famous tree. Both buildings have fallen into almost unrecognizable ruins. Apart from its history the spot is a beautiful one, looking down on fertile fields and vineyards and gentle bird-haunted slopes planted with olives and apricots and almonds. From the tower of the Russian Hospice near by we saw the gleaming Mediterranean framing in the view.

POOLS OF SOLOMON

On our way back we passed the so-called Pools of Solomon, three basins, one below the other, partly hewn out of the rock and partly enclosed by masonry some of which is simple and fine. The water from these pools and the springs round about are again carried, as in ancient times, to Jerusalem, but the modern buildings higher up round the springs which supplement the supply of water, convey no suggestion of the "sealed fountains" of the Song of Solomon, or anything for romance to hang itself upon. The three quiet pools which, when we saw them, mirrored the sunset sky, lie there on the rocky hillside as they must have lain when Solomon, who had built causeways along all the roads that led to Jerusalem, used to drive, as Josephus recounts, to this "very pleasant place," in the morning "sitting high in his chariot," made of the wood of Lebanon, lined with

gold, and with a canopy of Tyrian silk upheld by silver pillars. With him used to come a band of young men clad in purple, eminent for their tallness. Josephus describes them (Ant. 8:7) as having long hair sparkling with the gold-dust that was every day sprinkled on their heads. This evening the only sign of life was a flock of ducks paddling about on the surface of the second pool, while a stork, "Father of Legs," as the Arabs call him, looked on in a detached and meditative way.

The light lasted long enough for us to stop, on our way back to Jerusalem, at Bethlehem, the home of David, the background of the idyll of the Book of Ruth, and the place where Christ was born. Owing to that joyful event, the Church of the Nativity[2] there is now a spot of bitter hatred between the Greek, the Armenian, and the Roman sects, each of which claims to represent the true doctrine of Christ. The members of these three branches of Christianity cannot enter the church by the same corridor to kneel at the birthplace of the Prince of Peace, but have to come in and go out by separate ways lest they should quarrel and fight on this most holy ground. The entrance to the church from the square is through a narrow door only four feet high, designed to prevent the Moslems from showing their contempt for Christianity by driving their camels, donkeys or cattle into the shrine. I have never seen anything more

fierce than the look a Greek priest gave to our friends who were bowing before the Roman Catholic altar. I think that if he could have killed them he would have exulted in the deed with as clear a conscience as an old Crusader killing a Paynim. These warring sects have united, however, in one thing, which is to make the apse and its chapels as trivial as they can with sentimental pictures and tawdry ornaments. But nothing can spoil the magnificent effect of the basilica erected by St. Helena with its grand march of columns under gleaming remains of mosaics. The pious members of our party visited the so-called manger of Christ, where a silver star set into a slab marks the exact spot of his birth, with so much devotion and enthusiasm that by reaction we felt unable to have any serene and uplifted emotion whatever in the tinsel and tawdry cave, and escaped as soon as possible to study the mosaics and enjoy the solemn effect of the stately Corinthian columns of reddish limestone. According to St. Jerome, this same grotto, from the reign of Hadrian to that of Constantine, was dedicated to the cult of a heathen god with a semi-Semitic name, Adonis, meaning Lord. Such instances of syncretism, which might chill the devotion of the religious pilgrims, heightens for the modern pilgrim the interest of the shrine.[8]

Outside there was a noisy gathering of people

eager to sell chains and brooches with the Star of Bethlehem, picture post-cards of the most garish kind, and other pious mementoes, and it was very hard to shake these people off and get an undisturbed view of the fertile valley and the terraced slopes planted with olives and fig-trees that surround the town. A pool stands on the terrace in the depths of which hides a star, visible, it is said, to the eyes of virgins alone. Below is the grotto in which St. Jerome passed the greater part of his life. This saint in his cave, reading or beating his breast with a stone, with his lion lying at his feet, is one of the favourite subjects of Italian painting, serving more often as an excuse for enchanting glimpses of landscape than for the interpretation of religious passion.

We returned to Jerusalem in the twilight, leaving behind us the gleaming lights of the little town which lingers in the memory wrapped in a cloud of associations not only of the lowly Nativity but of the imperial splendour of Constantine and Justinian, the Arab destruction and the Frankish restoration, the devastations of the Central Asian hordes, and the firm hand of Napoleon settling the quarrels of the Latin and Greek priests.

CHAPTER V

TRANSJORDANIA

THE GHOR

A WEEK later we fortified our spirits for a trip into Transjordania, where we had been led to expect great hardship and discomfort but found perfectly possible conditions. Our road zigzagged down among the red rocks of the Judean wilderness, which was diversified with tiny plots of wheat and dotted with black goats that were somehow managing to find pasture in that bareness. A few flowers—but not anything like enough to correspond to the "veil of colour" our reading had led us to expect in spring in Palestine—grew in the crevices. One always has a mortified feeling on coming down from a height, but never was a descent more humiliating and depressing than that into the Valley of the Jordan. From two thousand five hundred feet above sea level you descend in about three quarters of an hour to the same depth below, and the air presses heavily upon body and spirit. But the beauty of the deep valley is so extraordinary and so interesting—at any rate seen under the conditions of sunlight in which we saw

it—that everything else is quickly forgotten. Many descriptions have been written of this sunken land squeezed down by a phenomenal wrinkling of the earth's surface, and I confess that I expected something horrible, weird, and foul. The Reverend Sir George Adam Smith [1] has given us half a dozen pages of unforgettable sentences like the following about the Jordan, which "trails and winds like an enormous green serpent, more forbidding in its rankness than any open water could be however foul or broken. The occasional beds of shingle are not clean and sparkling as in our own rivers but foul with ooze and slime . . . large trees lie about overthrown" and "the Jordan sweeps to the Dead Sea through unhealthy jungle relieved only by poisonous soil," scouring along "muddy between banks of mud, careless of beauty, careless of life." He tells of "mounds and ridges of grey marle, salt and greasy, with stretches of gravel, sand, clay, and other débris of a sea bottom that assume the weirdest shapes and give a desolate aspect to the Vale." He speaks of the ground "discoloured or crusted with salt," and of the "uncouthness" of this "unhealthy hollow" the higher parts of which look like nothing but "the refuse of a chemical manufactory." Major A. J. Bagnold (*The Times,* May 22, 1929) speaks of the "appalling white sterility of the crumbling limestone and salt-crust covering the valley" and

dwells on the "hot fetid air" and the "pestilent swamp" overhung by a cliff on which buzzards were sitting "entranced by a sickening odour of death." Dr. Huntington calls it an "infernal trench" and tells of tropical and oppressive heat, flies and dust, and the ghastliness of a sea over which no birds fly and in whose waters no fish live. Older writers repeat the tradition that every creature, man or beast, that took in the exhalations either perished or went raving mad—"as if the very atmosphere breathed the wrath of God." Religious writers tend, of course, to magnify the horror of the place because of the Cities of the Plain and the punishment meted out to them for their abominations. Chateaubriand wrote, *"Tout semble y respirer l'horreur de l'inceste d'où sortirent Amman et Moab. Le désert parrait muet de terreur, et l'on disait qu'il n'a osé rompre le silence depuis qu'il a entendu la voix de l'Éternel."* But men grow weary of eternal voices, though they thunder from Mount Sinai itself. Their vision undergoes the oddest transformations, and if we gazed with as much fascination as condemnation on those scenes of horror, it was perhaps because our eyes had all been dazzled—and shall I say perverted?—by reading, in prose almost as beautiful as that of Chateaubriand and much more modern, the copious and unhallowed chronicles which Marcel Proust has printed of fashionable life in

the most exclusive sets of the Cities of the Plain.

A book about the Dead Sea published by the London Religious Tract Society begins with the sentence, "The fascination of the horrible seems irresistible." We were rather looking forward to having our share of this fascination in getting down to the Hollow, as the Greeks call it, or the Rift (*el-Ghor* according to the Arabs). But we found it beautiful beyond imagination, as beautiful as Luxor, but more vivid and unusual. The wrinkled labyrinth of marl and salt deposit on both sides of the valley, worn by the winds and washed by torrents into strange shapes of castles, churches, towers, terraces, and minarets, so contemptuously alluded to as "mounds and ridges of grey marle, salt and greasy, giving a desolate air to the Vale" were, to our eyes, as impressive as our favourite so-called bad lands around Siena or in the upper Val d'Arno. Bad they are because no plant grows upon them, but as earth mirrors, reflecting and refracting in endless nuances of shade and colour the light of heaven, nothing, it seems to us, could be more beautiful, unless it were the mirror of the inscrutable Dead Sea, which we saw when in its pale turquoise depths it reflected the cliffs that embosom it. A light haze like a transparent and etherialized opal hung over the south end of the sea. "The land that smoketh," this valley is called in the Bible, and the fact that the Dead Sea, having

no outlet, has to evaporate the six and a half million tons of water that fall daily into it, so that a mist often hangs over it like smoke, is variously taken as a proof of the divine inspiration of that fascinating book, and as a sign of the harmony between Science and revealed Religion.

As we stood on the edge of the Lake where

visando su sepulture
el Jordan viene di morir,

we felt that we would have given almost anything to embark on those heavy waters which form a lake about the size of the Lake of Geneva, and see the marvels of its shores and the salt-encrusted plain at the south end with its weird formations (among which the Bedouins point out the Pillar of Salt which was Lot's wife, calling the Lake itself Bahr Lut, the Lake of Lot) and to follow out—one always goes on to the very end in imaginary excursions—the earth-crack which rises and falls, but keeps always below sea level till it is lost in the Gulf of Akaba. We envied the party of religious enthusiasts and archaeologists whose voyage round the Lake is described in a book called *Explorations at Sodom*. Although written in a partly pious and partly jocular style, it contains the result of an interesting scientific bit of research and excavation. Dr. Allbright of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem directed the operations, as-

sisted by the expert Père Malon, a well-known specialist in flint and old stone. Other members of the party belonged to the Church of God in Ohio, the Xenia Theological Seminary, and the Brethren of California. Their conclusion that the town of Sodom was to the south of the Dead Sea on a spot now covered with water has been practically accepted by all the archaeologists. The approval of Père Vincent, whose scholarly work on Jerusalem I have already mentioned, guaranteed the correctness of the observations and results. We longed to take a boat and push our way through the heavy waters and drop a hook and fish up bits of pottery belonging to the Bronze Age from the site of the drowned city—for since no traces of the later pottery are to be found there, it is clear that the city was destroyed or abandoned before the Early Iron Age set in—that is to say, just when the Bible places the destruction of the Cities of the Plain. I must, however, add that since the report of this Commission, the Pontifical Bible Institute, under Père Malon, has found traces of a town of the Bronze Age about four miles north of the Dead Sea, and there is a suggestion that this was once Sodom.

AMMAN

We left the Ghor with reluctance, crossing the Rubicon between Palestine and the Land of Moab

—the muddy Jordan. Much has been written about this river, the scene of Christ's baptism, and supposedly that of the miraculous division of the waters by Elijah's cloak, and the river over which St. Christopher carried the Christ Child, but few writers have had the unglamoured directness that enabled an American missionary of the fifties to say, "The Jordan would scarcely be dignified with the name of a river in America." Its appearance as we crossed the "Allenby Bridge" was, to be sure, insignificant: but in a sacred land like Palestine, the actual thing seen is only a peg on which to hang thrilling and sublime associations. We gazed on it with deep respect, and then, leaving it behind us, we proceeded up a fissure in the cliff on the east side, along a stream half hidden by poplars and great clumps of oleander in full bloom. Above us on the other side of the stream was the town of *Es Salt,* known to us chiefly by the "Sultana" (Saltana) raisins that come from it. Their preparation is simple. You merely spread out the grapes in the sun as soon as they are picked, and keep turning them over with fingers dipped in olive oil until they are thoroughly saturated with it.

At one point of our drive the road seemed to be moving, and we saw that an army of young locusts was creeping over it—one of the ancient plagues of Egypt. The only hope of staying the devastation caused by these insects used to be the arrival

of cranes coming in flocks from Egypt and devouring the locusts. But it was never more than a partial remedy. Barriers of fire and smoke-screens were, to be sure, of some use, but it remained for the Great War to yield, as a by-product of its brutality, a really effective remedy, namely, poison gas. Barrels of the materials for preparing this were lying ready all along the road, and when we returned two days later, our wheels rolled over the dead bodies of the vast invasion of locusts, checked in its march of destruction.

At the top of the ravine we found high pasture lands that at times resembled a noble park, planted with oaks, cedars, and dark-leaved carob trees. The road was bordered with honeysuckle, aloes, feathery tamarisks, laurestinus and arbutus, and huge bushes of anchusa made pools of colour where they grew close together. In this one day's drive we passed from the rocks and pines of Judea, the sparrows and starlings of Jerusalem, through the palms and bulbuls of the Ghor, where jackals and hyenas make their home, and even leopards and wild boars are sometimes seen, to the high desert nursery of camels with its larks and lizards and its scanty herbage.

We finally reached Amman, the ancient Philadelphia (one of them), a town lying across a poplar-fringed stream in a narrow valley between low but very steep hills. It was in besieging this town

that Bathsheba's inconvenient husband met his death. We found there a decent though not beautiful hotel planted directly in front of a colonnade of Corinthian columns flanking a great amphitheatre of forty tiers, the upper ones built in the rock. This is almost the only witness left of the town's ancient beauty. For beautiful Amman must have been when it was one (the most southern) of the famous towns of the Decapolis—a Hellenic confederacy designed to check the Semitic and especially the Arab powers and protect the great routes of commerce.

In the late afternoon we climbed up to a fort that overhangs the town of Amman and saw the sunset from the remains of a temple (perhaps dedicated to Moloch, whose cult was especially practised there) which stands on the height. Impressive as this ruin was, with its great blocks of ivory-coloured stone beautifully fitted and chiselled, we were more excited about a large ruined building with grand, slightly elliptical arches and elaborate decorations in low relief. It is of the type formerly called "Sassanian" and was supposed to have been erected by Khosroes II during the subjugation of Palestine. There is a great fascination in trying to spell out the history of a building from the evidences contained in its structure and decoration, and the sport becomes even more interesting when scholars differ as to what the building has to

say. In this case we found ourselves deciphering another message than that which a no less learned authority than M. Phené Spiers had gathered from the structure. He discusses it in a paper entitled "Sassanian Architecture," and describes it as a

> central court, square and open to the sky, with four recesses, one on each side; two are covered with barrel vaults, the other two with hemispherical vaults on false pendentives—that is to say, the monarch [Khosroes II] wanted the feature, but the Syrian builder did not know how to build it, and he arrived at the result in a haphazard manner. . . . Except for the false pendentives, I should be inclined to think the building was designed by and its execution carried out under a Sassanian architect, with a few Sassanian masons; and that the work was handed over to Syrio-Greek artists to decorate.

With the latter statement my husband was in agreement, but he would date the building about a century later than Khosroes II, whose rule was scarcely long enough for the erection of all the monuments ascribed to him. He read the history told in the stones of the building in terms not of Sassanian but of Omayyad inspiration and Syrio-Greek execution. Syrian masons, according to him, built the hall for their Arab overlords, and decorated it in accordance with the practices and forms of their not very distant Justinian predecessors.

MADABA

The next day, accompanied by a soldier from the police force, kindly sent with us by Peake Pasha, the Englishman of authority in this district, we passed through the ancient kingdom of the Amorites into the land of Moab, motoring for miles over the rolling plateau which slopes gently eastward, where extensive fields of grain pass imperceptibly into the monotonous desert. Along the way we noticed many clumps of wild black iris, and heard myriads of silver-toned larks singing overhead.

Our first stop was to see the mosaics that have been uncovered on the floors of various squalid Arab-inhabited houses in Madaba. This town, once rich and flourishing, as the mosaic floors and the remains of a street of columns show, was deserted when the Roman power declined, and it was not lived in again till 1880, when a colony of Christians, exiles from Turkey, took possession of the thirteen-hundred-year-old ruin, gathering about them, little by little, an addition of native Arabs. It was in 1884 that the mosaic view of Jerusalem was unearthed in the Greek church which they built at the top of the town. This and one or two other fifth-century floor mosaics have been photographed and published,[2] but we were among the first to see a mosaic that had just been uncovered, of rather coarse workmanship, with a zoological

surprise in the form of a decorative design of two cows in the branches of a tree.

Another mosaic that greatly interested us was in a rich Arab's harem, covering the floor of a large round room which had perhaps been a church. The ladies were hurried out at our approach, leaving their slippers, veils, sweetmeats, and musical instruments scattered among the filthy cushions on the floor around the walls. Their master sat with crossed legs in a shallow niche, quietly smoking a narghileh, and scarcely took any notice of us; I fancy he was drugging himself. Of course his "palace" was approached through a dirty and disorderly compound, rank with refuse and foul smells. Several other floor mosaics we saw, some with very beautiful borders and animals in the Alexandrian style; and we suspect that most of the houses will turn out to have mosaic floors when the filth that has accumulated on them is removed. There is also a large mound, or *Tell,* to one side of the town which will probably yield rich finds when it is excavated.

M'SHATTA

The best was to come, for we motored on across the desert to have our picnic lunch in the ruins of the incomparable palace of M'shatta, with its grandiose proportions and rich ornaments, a building which, as Van Berchem says, "has fascinated

the world more than any other in Syria."[3] It has ever been something of a mystery, standing solitary in the desert in its unparalleled magnificence, and it has variously been called Roman, Byzantine, Sassanide and Persian.[4] But Père Lammens has traced it back to a passage in an old writer, Severus ibn al-Moguffa, who says that the Omayyid Walid II began it in 743. "He built," the old chronicler writes, "a town in the heart of the desert to immortalize his name, and requisitioned workmen from all his provinces." To this ambitious and impetuous ruler it was nothing that the nearest water was fifteen miles away—he had plenty of slaves to fetch and carry. But death overtook him the year after he had begun to build, and his fantastic but magnificent palace was never carried to completion. This "rose of the wilderness" remained undespoiled till 1905, but since then the Germans have carried off to the Berlin museum the richly carved façade. Now that the railway to Mecca runs close by, the natives are carrying on their age-long occupation of taking away the stones and bricks from the old buildings to make their own horrible hovels, which, in this case, crowd near the railway station. It is so much easier to quarry in old temples and palaces and steal their cut and prepared blocks of masonry, breaking them up if they are too big, than to prepare fresh building material. Everywhere it has been the builders,

rather than time or even than raiders and conquerors to whom the obliteration of the remains of antiquity is due. The abbeys of England have been the quarries for the manor houses; the Coliseum had supplied the materials for the palaces of Rome; the stones of Syrian temples and fortifications have built castles and Christian churches and mosques. Even in antiquity the practice was so common that the Romans tried to check it by decreeing that any one who took stones from ancient buildings to use for himself should have his hands cut off. But nothing is sacred to these modern vandals; not only palaces and temples but structures of the highest utility such as bridges, aqueducts, paved roads, cisterns, and oil presses are destroyed. We were unhappy to see the process going on under our very eyes when we met a man driving away from M'shatta with his cart full of bricks from the palace, but we understood that the government could not possibly afford to keep enough guards at every ruin to restrain the marauders.

Yet in spite of the reverent spoliation of the Germans and the present-day depredations, a great deal remains of this most romantic of all old buildings, with its extraordinarily delicate ornamental carving on the outside walls. It stands alone on the undulating desert, and this to our delight was alive with hundreds of camels, great

prehistoric-looking beasts loping away at our approach, leaning over against the wind, followed by their funny, lumpy youngsters, some still so young that their fleece was soft and curly and white as lambs, where the older ones had their winter tufts of hair clinging here and there to their smooth black and greasy sides. I got almost near enough to a young one to stroke it, but at the last moment it took fright and ran off to its mother. We had been told that motors were beginning to render camels superfluous and that the raising of sheep was taking the place of the camel industry which since the beginning of time has occupied the Arabs of the desert; but I must say that these vast herds of camels dotting the plain all the way to the ridge of mountains on the horizon did not show that these beasts had ceased to be worth raising. As we were resting among the ruins, a very handsome Sheik rode up on his Arab steed and invited the party to come and sup with him under his black goat-skin tent stretched out among his camel herds. He was a very attractive figure with his fine carriage, hawk nose, bright eyes, and gleaming teeth; but we thought of the insects we should probably meet in his tent, and the horrible mutton fat of his kitchen, and said that we must be getting back.

It was dark when we again reached Amman, and we saw just outside the town the blazing elec-

tric lights of the Palace of King Abdullah, titular ruler of the somewhat ill-defined district of Transjordania, the son of King Hussein and the brother of the better known Feisal. He enjoys a bad notoriety among archaeologists and lovers of beauty for having built his tasteless modern palace out of the stones of the ancient Odeon of Amman, and for pulling down the old mosque to build a new one in its place.

JERASH

We spent the next day at Jerash. It took two hours or more to motor there through scenery which recalled the most beautiful parts of Sicily (minus Etna). The noble Greco-Roman ruins of the ancient capital, Gerasa, decorate the sides of the hill, mounting up towards a ridge, and they are, next to Palmyra and Baalbec, the finest of the Hellenistic cities we saw.

At this point, our first contact with imposing classical ruins, I fear I must make a digression to explain my use of the terms *Greco-Roman* and *Hellenistic* in speaking of Syrian classical architecture, which is by most writers called simply *Roman*.

Historically the term is accurate, for the monuments belong to the time when Rome ruled the country, as they date largely from the epoch of the Antonines (A.D. 138-180). The growing pros-

perity consequent upon the finally imposed peace gave an almost unequalled impetus to building in Syria and the adjacent lands. Whole towns, such as Jerash, Palmyra and Baalbec sprang as it were from the earth built in the uniform style current at the time: temples and palaces, bridges and baths, theatres, aqueducts, and triumphal arches, and all the architectural requirements of a growing and prosperous civilization. As Père Vincent says, speaking of the Roman rule in the land: "Among its historical results one of the most precious is the fact that its monumental remains form a whole and belong to the same Roman period." On the other hand, to call the style in which these were built "Roman," as is generally done, is entirely misleading; Rome's intellectual, artistic and religious culture was only an imitation of the Greek—not a development, as was Greek culture of the Egyptian—and like all imitations, a decline. The classic buildings of Syria are in essence Greek, modified by local tradition and the nature of the materials used. The original Greek style, as we know, employing neither mortar nor any artifice of construction, such as vaults and arches, depended upon the strict observance of the laws of stability; this clear and logical method of building was not incompatible with the changes and evolution of dependent forms such as capitals, sculptured imposts, and pediments. Carried to Rome,

this system of architecture, it is true, was somewhat modified by the Romans, who were skilled and daring engineers and understood to some extent the use that could be made of composite material, of arches, of vaulting and even of the cupola. Whether they borrowed these cylindrical and spheric forms from Asia is a much discussed question, but they developed these forms, leaving the Greek architects to ornament them. But in spite of concessions to Roman ideas and while submitting to the prevailing decadence of all the arts, the Greek builders and decorators did not completely lose the tradition of their origin. In sculpture, in stucco work, and in jewellery they followed the old models, even when they degraded them. Although they were perhaps less free in architecture, they had not forgotten their own style, and when the great impulse towards new building was felt in Syria the evolution of Greek art regained its normal course of development. Greek masons, or Syrians trained in the Greek tradition, were employed, and the numberless monuments there belong absolutely to the Greek tradition. The architects had lost, it is true, the delicacy of taste and perfection of execution of the classic era, but they preserved the logical proportions and the balance which inspired early Grecian architecture. They made very little use of mortar and depended upon the solidity of their works for preservation,

employing only rarely and very discreetly the Roman arches and vaults, cutting off excrescences and subordinating their orders to the dimensions, materials, and the scope of the buildings. They created, in short, good, solid traditional buildings in which each member frankly expressed its function, and decorated them with a sobriety that combined elegance with firmness. This style of building executed in Syria by Hellenistic architects only slightly influenced by Roman innovations and practices, must be looked on as a lineal descendant from Greek classical architecture, and I have called it Greco-Roman, or, more frankly, Hellenistic, when I have had to speak about the remains of classical antiquity existing in Syria.

In Jerash the buildings date from the second and third centuries and, except for the Byzantine churches that, later on, nestled themselves among the ruins, there has been no obliteration by occupation, for the Arab village lies across the ravine on the other side. Monuments of Domitian, Nerva, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus and Julia Domna, wife of Septimius, have been discovered there. Passing through a great triumphal arch, which reminds one of the Arch of Septimius in Rome, you leave to the right the theatre and the Naumachia, or water-arena for the staging of naval battles, and pass along a colonnade, seventy-five of whose five hundred and

twenty columns are still standing. The others appear to have been overthrown by an earthquake and the inhabitants have, as usual, broken them up and carried them away for building. You reach the paved street of the town which leads to the grandly placed tetrapylon, or meetin-place of four streets, the cross-street of which descends the hill by a flight of steps to a five-arched bridge over a brook leading to the baths and some other ancient buildings now surrounded by the modern town. Above to the left the cross-street leads by a flight of steps to the glorious remains of the great temple near the top of the ridge, dedicated to Artemis, to whom, no doubt, the old worship of Astarte was more or less amalgamated. The portico and part of the walls of this beautiful building are fairly well preserved. The whole effect from the platform on which the temple stands down the steps to the tetrapylon and again down to the river must have been one of the grandest sights of antiquity. In few places in the world have the advantages of a site been so well understood and exploited for the purposes of a city.

Mr. John Crowfoot and his assistant, Mr. A. R. M. Jones, who were working under the joint auspices of the British School of Architecture at Jerusalem and Yale University, kindly took us about and showed us the new excavations. The government of Transjordania, under Mr. Hors-

field, is re-erecting fallen columns and repairing a great fountain on the main street, clearing rubbish from the buildings and otherwise restoring the classic remains. But the chief interest for the moment was in a group of seven or eight Byzantine churches on the sites of earlier buildings and built out of their stones. They had just uncovered a basilica which they judged, partly from the good quality of the masonry, to date from the fourth century. They had also excavated a small basilica in the southwest angle of the town; on the mosaic floor there were some inscriptions which they have translated; one runs in the form of a dialogue:

> Mosaic, who dedicated thee?
> He who made these halls.
> And who the shepherd inscribed? For whose sake maketh he manifest his works?
> His name is Anastasius of the four cities; unto the Saviour was his vow.

The mosaics of the nave are well preserved and were swept clean for our benefit, to be covered with sand again later lest the natives should come and pick out the stones. The most interesting of these mosaics was a series of bird's-eye views of towns, one of them being Alexandria.

Another series of churches has also been discovered and set to rights as far as may be; one, according to the mosaic inscription, was built in 529 and dedicated to St. George. The central

church of the group was erected in 531 according to an inscription which says that it was built at the expense of one Theodore, in honour of St. John the Baptist. Mr. Jones, in an account that recently appeared in the London *Times,* says of this church:

Its plan is of the greatest importance and interest, and forms a link in the chain of round buildings beginning with the Holy Sepulchre and ending with the Dome of the Rock, standing closest to the cathedral at Bostra. . . . The mosaics, though much damaged, are of fine quality and high interest. The border is of bold scroll-like foliage in which are ensconced various beasts and birds, including a lion hunting a gazelle, a leopard, a hound, a stork, a dove, and a duck. Within it are river scenes in which fishes and water birds swim among lotus plants. Within this again are ranges of cities, of which three, and a part of a fourth survive, besides a detached triumphal arch and a square church with a campanile and an octagonal lantern surmounted by a pyramidal roof. One of the cities is again labelled Alexandria; to the right of it is a detached square tower, about three-and-a-half cubes high, surmounted by a polygonal lantern; the top and the label have unfortunately perished, but there can be little doubt that it is the earliest known representation of the Pharos, and an important contribution to the much vexed problem of its structure. The style of the river scenes suggests that the artist was an Egyptian or at any rate worked on Egyptian models, and the double occurrence of Alexandria among the towns confirms this conclusion.

These churches certainly "promise," he wrote, "to form an important addition to our knowledge of early Christian architecture, decorative art, and ritual."

Quite as interesting was the synagogue, to uncover which parts of a Christian church dating from 530 had to be broken down. This synagogue stood at the top of the ridge, in conformity with the Talmud, which orders the highest available place to be chosen for erecting the synagogue. The floor was evidently entirely covered with mosaics—much of which Mr. Crowfoot had cleared—representing the Ark. The heads of Shem and Japhet are preserved, and scores of small figures of different animals in processions.

The central church "of the Fountain" was in its day the scene of a yearly miracle which may be compared in its popularity, and no doubt in its trickery, to the "Greek Fire" in the Holy Sepulchre, for here was repeated every year for the edification of the faithful, Christ's first miracle of turning water into wine. One cannot help wondering whether this did not take the place of some Bacchic festival.

After lunch we visited the two theatres at the opposite ends of the town, and a large temple close to where we came in. This has four windows quite intact which one would not be surprised to see in some early Renaissance palace, perhaps by Brun-

ellesco, though the masonry surrounding them is of larger blocks of stone than the Italians used.

On the way coming and going we passed a number of tidy prosperous-looking villages inhabited, like Amman, by the industrious and energetic Circassians whom the Turks allowed to settle there in 1878, when their life in Russia became too unsettled and troubled. They were meant by the Turks to act as a bulwark against the desert Bedouins. From our point of view they were far worse than the Bedouins, for where the Bedouins allow things to fall slowly into decay by neglect, these Circassians are competent enough to blow up with dynamite the ruins of which they want to use the stones. They have also cut down the oaks that clothed the hills without, however, being competent enough to make new plantations. Bedouins need neither stones nor wood for their dwellings and so let the ruins, and to some extent, the forests alone. We owe it, indeed, to the ravaging hosts of Khosroes that so many antique remains are left us. But for his conquest, the prosperity of Syria might have gone on for centuries, and prosperity means building and changes. The great ruins that delight us now would have been absorbed into the stream of change and renewal.

JERICHO TO JERUSALEM

The next day we returned to Jerusalem, crossing again the Ghor. We ate our lunch at the clean and comfortable hotel at what was once Jericho, not far from the sparkling fountain whose waters were purified by the Prophet Elisha. The miracle is described in II Kings 19: 22.

And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth, but the water is naught and the ground is barren. And he said, Bring me a new cruse and put salt therein; and they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters and cast the salt there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; and there shall not be from them any more death and barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha, which he spake.

It is clear, by the way, that the whole valley could be turned again into the earthly paradise which, after Elisha's miracle, enraptured the Israelites and enriched Cleopatra with balm, oils, sugar-cane, and dates, if only the ancient form of irrigation were restored. For wherever the water promotes vegetation, outside the small area of modern Jericho, a jungle of thorns, wild bushes, bamboos, and tamarisks has grown up in the place of the palm trees that once shaded the balsam gardens of Herod's favourite winter resort.

I have said that the hotel was comfortable, but we were not comfortable there, as this time we found the air of the Ghor heavy enough for the most sinister descriptions of the place. I awoke after a brief siesta with a feeling almost of desperation, as if I had been buried alive. I remembered with complete disagreement that Josephus spoke of "the great happiness of the situation of Jericho." Fascinating as it must be, judging from the descriptions I have read, to explore the Valley of the Jordan north of Jericho,[5] the thought of remaining longer in that hot-house, or taking any exertion in that melting atmosphere, was intolerable, and we were glad to get into our cars again and begin to climb up to Jerusalem, even though we left unexplored the "Mount of Temptation" which rises sharply to the north, honey-combed with hermits' cells. It is supposed to be the site of the forty days' temptation of Christ, and here the Abyssinian Christians still come to pass the Lenten season. This time we took the old road, rougher and steeper than the new motor road by which we had come down, but more beautiful as to scenery; it led us through the strangely shaped hills and up the valley of "the brook Kerith," overlooking the ravine where on the steep side opposite clings a Greek monastery, a cluster of buildings with terraces, balconies, and domes looking as if they stood one upon the roof of the other, making

the effect of a sunk relief hollowed out of the rock. Here and elsewhere in the furrowed flanks of these water-fretted hills, monks lead their idle but, let us hope, meditative lives.

The water that supplies the convent of St. George is taken direct from the stream that runs down the gully and is conducted thither in an attractive deep channel—water in a land where it is scarce is the most attractive thing on earth. Flying over our road and around the monastery we noticed some beautiful birds with deep purple wings lined with orange, graceful as swallows. I believe they are what Dean Tristram calls grackle, and are a local variety of blackbird. The old road joins the one we came down by at the Inn of the Good Samaritan, and we continued our way round the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem.

Before turning the corner we got our last glimpse of the Dead Sea, the most imposing and beautiful lake on the whole earth, as de Saulcy, one of the few appreciators of the Ghor's beauty, has called it in his *Journey round the Dead Sea and in the Bible Lands*. To most people the Ghor is but a background for John the Baptist, and others might see Lot and his wife and family fleeing to the mountain caves while the Lord poured destruction on Sodom and Gomorrah, or Elijah in the fastnesses being fed by the Ravens.

CITIES OF THE PLAIN

I ended, however, by thinking of the various people of our own day whom the Bible romance of the "Cities of the Plain" has attracted to the spot, and their efforts to prove that it did happen, or might have happened, exactly as it is described in Genesis. It interested me to remember the way they generally tell the story, alluding only in the most sketchy fashion to the vivid dialogue in which Abraham reads a moral lesson to the angry Jehovah, although it really marked a tremendous epoch in the history of humanity, for it is the earliest record of the setting up of a standard of justice above the passions of the wilful gods. But I will quote the remarkable passage (Genesis 18) without further comment:

And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. . . . But Abraham stood yet before the Lord. And Abraham drew near and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the

Lord said, if I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken it upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall be thirty found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not do it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the Lord went his way. . . ."

CHAPTER VI

SAMARIA AND GALILEE

WHEN we drove away from Jerusalem, *"Cuidad de las tristezas,"* on April 23, we were relieved, much though we loved the town, to put behind us all the difficult questions that had been perplexing us there and yield ourselves to the enjoyment of the beautiful and smiling scenery that gradually begins as Judea passes into Samaria.

PASSOVER AT NABLUS

We found, it is true, the tension scarcely less, though for us it was more remote and impersonal, when we arrived at the town of Schechem (now Nablus), for it happened to be the great day of the Samaritan Sacrifice of the Passover. This takes place on the high hill of Gerizim[1] above the town and consists of the slaughter and consumption of seven lambs in strict accordance with the Old Testament ritual.[2] As we entered the town towards evening the whole of the population and many visitors were beginning to swarm up the steep and stony path that leads to the site of the sacrifice. Of course I wanted to go, but the sight of the small

donkeys with their filthy saddles, and the look of the mountain path, deterred me from putting my rheumatic bones to the test of this experience; the more so, as our dragoman assured us that there was little to see except a crowd of filthy beggars.

We found the hotel at Nablus clean and comfortable and the proprietor extremely courteous and considerate. As most of the inhabitants of the town were out on the mountain, we had a quiet night, which seemed doubly agreeable after the never ending noises of Jerusalem, with chanting pilgrims making their way to the Holy Sepulchre, Arabs shouting their monotonous cry of "Allah" on their way to the mosque, and the uproar of a busy street whose inhabitants retire for a couple of hours only before beginning again shouting, beating on metal, and wheeling hand-carts over the cobbled pavement.

GEOGRAPHY AND CHARACTER OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA

When we looked about us in daylight we realized that we were in a very different land indeed from Judea. Here the rocks are formed of sloping strata of varying hardness declining gently to the south; the towns nestle into the nooks on the sides of these hills in marked contrast to the Judean villages, those stern masses of grey stone built upon the high ridges, whose very aspect is warlike. Here

is found an abundance of water, and many groves of olives, fruit orchards, and rich fields of grain. The structure of the land is such that it can easily be traversed in almost any direction, so that foreign influence has always played a great part in forming the character and customs of the people. Life there is varied and easy, even luxurious, and apparently from earliest times the difference between Jews and Samaritans has been very marked. When Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman at the well, which we passed on the way to Nazareth, it surprised even His own disciples, who, like other Jews, withheld themselves from all commerce with the easy-going and hence presumably morally relaxed Samaritans.

I think that nobody could pass from Judea to Samaria without an instinctive consciousness of contrast and its implications but, of course, one's instinct is deepened and one's intelligence enlightened by such books of scholarly research and insight as Sir George Adam Smith's and Professor Huntington's which not only describe the physical aspect of the land but relate it to the characters that were formed there by the slow and unrecognized yet persistent forces of nature, and go on from these considerations to suggest explanations of the great historic world-dramas that have been played out in that small land. This historical background is no less important for Samaria than it is for Judea,

and even the briefest mention of the more important events of which Samaria was the theatre makes one's visit more interesting.

We have no account of its conquest by Israel, as the Israelites apparently met with no resistance till they reached the plains of Esdraelon and Jezreel, which lie on Samaria's southern border. Later, the Canaanites pushed them back and took almost complete possession of the land; in the days of Gideon the Midianites swept over it from Esdraelon, and in Elisha's time the Syrians had conquered it as far as the town of Samaria on the western side of the watershed. Then came the Assyrians, who carried off into captivity the greater part of the nation. The drama of Judith and Holofernes took place there; Vespasian at the head of his armies made a forced march across the district, and Titus finally ascended to Judea by the easy slopes of Samaria.

But the trampling and the war cries of armies, the clatter of chariots, the sound of trumpets seem thin and ghostly today in the quiet scenes across which we are gliding. We can see that Samaria has resumed her peaceful life of husbandry, and that the returned Jews are industriously developing her natural resources. They are secure at last from the invader, are delivered from Turkish exaction, are aided by the latest scientific knowledge and appliances for irrigation and agriculture, and are

upheld by the sympathy and contributions of all the world (except their neighbours, the Arabs!). Some of their most flourishing colonies are in the plain of Esdraelon, and of these I will speak later.

NABLUS

To come back to our journey: we spent the morning of April 24th wandering about the picturesque old town of Nablus (a variant of Neapolis—the New Town), which is sacred to Christians as having been the place where Abraham pitched his tent on first entering the land and near which he set up the first altar to Jehovah, and the place where Joseph was buried (they still show you his reputed tomb on the outskirts of the town). Here Joshua read out the Law of Moses to the assembled Israelites, making of the northern mountain, Ebal, the mountain of curses, and of Gerizim, the southern, the mountain of blessings. It lies in a long, narrow valley between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, copiously watered by seventy springs, where shady trees respond to the moisture. A few stately palaces and here and there carved doorways and windows, fallen columns and sculptured capitals lying on the ground speak of past magnificence. We looked into the great mosque, originally a Justinian basilica, and the Crusaders' church now called the "Mosque of Victory," which are both rather ruined by earthquake. We saw too the "Mosque

of Heaven" standing on the spot where Joseph's coat of many colours was brought to his father by his deceitful brethren. Also we saw the Mosque of the Lepers, a picturesque place built by the Crusaders as a hospital for the Templars. We did not see the famous Codex of the Pentateuch, the only part of the Bible accepted by the Samaritans, which is certainly no older than the Christian era although they claim that it was written by a son, or at most a grandson, of Aaron. The priest who has charge of it had betaken himself, in his white robes and red turban, to the mountain of Gerizim to kill lambs. But even if he had been there, we were so overfed with sects, creeds, and religious peculiarities that I dare say we should not have tried to see it.

THE TOWN OF SAMARIA

We stopped off on our way to Nazareth to see the original town of Samaria, now sometimes called Sebastieh, famous for the crusading church of St. John and the tradition that the Baptist was beheaded there. The glory of that event seems to belong really (if "really" can be used in connection with any of these sites!) to the Moabite town called Mukaur, the ancient Machaerus. They show you the Saint's tomb in the crypt of the church at Samaria, and we were induced to look into it through a hole in the

outer wall. But as Lady Sybil Lubbock [3] says, "the space being both empty and completely dark, it was not a striking sight." The golden coloured columns still standing in the open court of the empty church with their beautiful capitals and the fine mouldings are well worth the attention of the beauty lover. More interesting still were the recently excavated ruins higher up on the hill which are all that remain of the palace where Herod was haunted by the ghost of Mariamne, the wife he murdered, yet could not be restrained by that awful vision from strangling his sons. He named the place Sebaste (the Greek for Augustus), but the old name survives. It was here that Jezebel slew the Prophets of Jehovah, and Jehu, with even greater brutality, the Priests of Baal.

But the idyllic pastoral view of the plain of Sharon and the blue Mediterranean gives back no echoes of these fierce events, and the proud remains of Herod's great city which once stood there like a crown on the top of the hill, are now fallen to ruin in the midst of corn fields and olives.

MOUNT TABOR

We passed what was pointed out to us as Naboth's vineyard on our way to Jenin (En Gannin, "the Garden Spring"), situated at the entrance to the Plain of Esdraelon. We passed, but did not turn aside to visit, the Well of Dothan, where

Joseph was sold by his brothers to merchants trafficking between Egypt and the East. Early in the afternoon we had to leave the highroad and feel our way along paths winding through fields planted with wheat and millet that surged up in a green sea to the foot of Mount Tabor, the traditional scene of the Transfiguration, and still called by the Arabs the Hill of Light, *Djidel-en-Nur*. As we climbed up the steep and winding road we looked over to the village of Endor, where Saul heard the ghost's sombre voice announcing to him, "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." The road took us up through oak and ilex trees to the Greek and Catholic churches and monasteries built over the ruins of the ancient town. From the time of Joshua on, this mountain was covered with towers, walls, forts, and many other buildings; Byzantines, Jews, Romans, Crusaders and Saracens rebuilt it, added to it, and then again destroyed it. The one thing certain about it is that, in spite of Origen and St. Jerome, it cannot have been the lonely spot where the Transfiguration took place; the rival claims of the Greeks and Latins who each insist that the exact spot is within their own church, must be classed with most of the other apocryphal sites of the Holy Legend. What no destructive criticism can destroy, however, is the incredibly lovely view from the ruined battlements. West and north the hills of Galilee rise like waves through whose

hollows the pear-shaped Lake of Tiberias appears blue and tranquil lying in the bosom of the rift, while the snowy heights of Mount Hermon seem to hover like a white cloud in the infinite distance. On the other side of the lake pastures and villages run up to the blue line of the Jaulan mountains, and all around the foot of the mountain sweeps the glorious plain decked in mantling wheat and patterned into myriad shapes by the roads of dark soil crossing it. To east and west across the Ghor rise the heights of Gilead; the dreamy blue hills of Samaria are seen on the south, and the long ridge of Carmel stretches itself out into the sea on the west. We could discern, rising on the edge of the plain of Jezreel, King Fulke's fortress of Belvoir, which resisted every attack until Saladin at last took it in 1188. I left my husband to archaeologize among the ruins with our learned and enlightened friend, Father Baldi, while I sat gazing at the landscape which changed and softened as the sun lengthened the shadows, and I drank in the perfume of honeysuckle and wild thyme and the many scented herbs that garnish the mountain slopes, listening to hidden finches singing little trills, and the unseen cuckoo's soft but clear cry from terrace to terrace. I happily forgot the churches that are planted there, the tasteless Greek edifice and the dead-alive Latin copy of the church of Turmanin (a now destroyed basilica between Aleppo and

Antioch). But my carnal soul remembers the excellent tea with delicious mountain honey, kindly offered us by the Franciscans.

We made our way in the gathering twilight back across the rich plain, reaching Nazareth and the shelter of the Franciscan Hospice shortly after sunset.

NAZARETH

The next day we saw for the second time (for we had had a brief glimpse of the town on our way to Jerusalem) the only things that from our point of view gave great value to our visits there, for the town itself looks like a commonplace European town of particularly unattractive architecture, and the big bare Church of the Annunciation, with its more than doubtful site of the house of the Virgin (which Latin Catholics believe to have been miraculously transported in 1291 to Loreto near Ancona to get it out of Moslem hands), reminded us too much of the distressing impostures at Jerusalem. I felt almost sorry that banal actuality intruded itself upon the beautiful vision the name of the sacred town calls up.

The few antique columns standing or lying in the courtyard in the shade of the big trees were more to our taste than the gaunt but bedizened church. The really great works of art in the place are the capitals from the Crusaders' church

that once occupied this site. They are now carefully preserved in the museum in the courtyard of the present church, having been saved from destruction by being buried. These are among the best specimens of twelfth-century Burgundian sculpture. It was first believed by archaeologists that they were actually executed in France and brought over to adorn the church, but an analysis of the stone, made at the instance of M. Deschamps, the learned and enthusiastic head of the Trocadero Museum in Paris, proves that it was taken from the quarries near Nazareth. The work must therefore have been done by some crusading sculptor. These capitals are very original and have a peculiar and delicate beauty of line and type, and a fire all their own.

We were sorry to leave Nazareth without climbing the hill behind it, which is said to command a beautiful view of the plain with Mount Carmel to the west and Mount Tabor to the east and the hills and high fertile plateaus which break down towards the Lake of Galilee to the north. The view from the terrace of the church, though less extended, is very lovely. Standing there I was overcome by the tragedy of how this legend of the heavenly visitant bringing the Godhead to earth, slowly fashioned into beauty by the spirit of poetry in man, was all too soon obscured by dogma and superstition and ended in positive inhumanity as an

item in a creed to doubt which condemned one to the stake and afterwards to the undying fires of hell.

THE PLAIN OF ESDRAELON

I must fulfil my promise to describe the great plain of Megiddo or Esdraelon on which we looked down from Mount Tabor and from the terrace of the church at Nazareth, and which we left behind us when we drove off in the afternoon to the Lake of Galilee. The Fault of Esdraelon gapes between the central range of the Judean-Samaritan hills and the mountains of Galilee. It is entered from the sea on the south side of Mount Carmel by the easy pass of Megiddo, leading from the sea across the Plain of Sharon, or less conveniently by the valley of the river on the north which drains the plain, the Kishon, where Deborah sang her fierce song of victory. It widens into a great irregular triangle like a vast inland basin with grassy bays running up into the mountains on the north and south, and declining into two valleys on the east, the one leading to the Jordan (the Vale of Jezreel), and the other the valley north of Tiberias on the Lake of Galilee. It lies in the arms of Samaria, but was counted to its northern neighbour, Galilee, when the geography-confounding Samaritan schism divorced it from the hills that embrace it. The so-called plain is far from being

a dead level, for besides dipping on the east to the Jordan and to the Lake of Galilee, it is rolled up here and there into long swells like gigantic waves. Unforgettable is the description of it given by Jacob when he divided his land among his sons, Esdraelon falling to the portion of the sixth son, Issachar. It has been thus translated and commented on by Sir George Adam Smith:

"Issachar is a large-limbed ass,
Stretching himself between the sheepfolds:
For he saw a resting-place that it was good,
And the land that it was pleasant."

Such exactly is Esdraelon—a land relaxed and sprawling up among the hills to north, south and east, as you will see a loosened ass roll and stretch his limbs any day in the sunshine in a Syrian village yard. To the highlander looking down upon it, Esdraelon is room to stretch in and lie happy. Yet the figure of the ass goes further—the room must be paid for—

"So he bowed his shoulder to bear
And became a servant under task-work."

The inheritors of this plain never enjoyed the highland independence of Manasseh or Naphtali. Open to east and west, pleasantest stage on the highway from the Nile to the Euphrates, Esdraelon was at distant intervals the war-path or battle-field of great empires, but more regularly the prey and pasture of the Arabs, who with each spring came upon it over Jordan. Even when there has been no invasion to fear, Esdraelon has still suffered: when she has not been the camp of the for-

eigner she has served as the estate of her neighbours. Ten years ago the peasants got rid of the Arabs of the desert, only to be bought up by Greek capitalists from Beyrout.

This was written some thirty years ago; since then the Zionists, of whom more presently, have begun to develop its agricultural resources.

The plain is remarkable for its fertility. In the spring it resembles a vast green lake haunted by cranes and storks; even the gazelle is sometimes seen there. Owing to its easy access from the coast on one side and from the Valley of the Jordan on the other it was the caravan road between Egypt and Mesopotamia and felt the shock of armies in the clash of empires. Pompey, Mark Antony followed by Cleopatra and her ladies in litters, Vespasian, and Titus marched across the fields and along the military road that had been fortified and refortified before them by the Egyptians, the Canaanites, and the Israelites. The Roman Peace, linking up the coast with the Greek cities of the Decapolis on the other side of the Jordan, banished the black tents of the Bedouins; and in the fourth century it was so safe that the Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem and Galilee built churches and cloisters along the way. But soon after the seventh century the scattered hordes of the desert, united by a new faith, swept over the whole land. The Arabs held it for nearly five hundred years, destroying

all the monuments and civilization itself, till the Crusaders came to conquer the country, rebuild the ancient cloisters, and plant great fortress-castles on the rocks that surround the plain. They tried to resuscitate the obliterated sacred memories of the past but were not always able to replant them in their proper sites. Then Saladin defeated them on the plateau behind Nazareth and the followers of Mahomet ruled—or misruled—the land until our own day.

Bible history and legend are, of course, not wanting to the plain. At the foot of Mount Tabor is the little village of Deburieh which is probably reminiscent of Deborah and the headquarters of the Israelite army, which defeated Sisera and his Canaanites. Near by, Jael, finding Sisera asleep in his tent, "went softly unto him and smote a nail into his temples and fastened it into the ground." It was at Dothan that, upon the prayer of Elijah, the Lord smote with blindness the Syrian army that had come up to take him and were then guided by the prophet himself up into the midst of Samaria.

ZIONISM

Today the fertile but marshy plain, so long desolate under Turkish rule, has begun to repopulate itself. No longer is the husbandman so heavily taxed for each fruit-bearing tree that he abstains from planting them and even finds it cheaper to

cut down the ones he has. The strangest and most persistent patriotism in the world has brought back thousands of Jews to develop a land that at the best was theirs more in promise and hope than in reality. One might think of it as a gigantic example of the hypnotic influence of a word—"Zion" being enough to drag them from their homes to face incredible discomforts. The successful Zionist colonies are in places like the plains of Sharon and Esdraelon, or in the highest part of Galilee rather than in Judea and the more accessible parts of Galilee, the actual homes of their ancestors. They are, in fact, most successful where their ancestors were least so, for the Philistines owned the low rich plain south of Carmel which the Jews conquered but really never long held, and Esdraelon was never securely theirs.

On general considerations, and before visiting the country, the whole Zionist scheme, with the readoption of Hebrew as a current language, seemed to us fantastic and doomed to failure. Geography has a tendency to resist the changes of culture and inhabitants, and the strong probability was that the country formed and surrounded as Palestine is, would remain what it used to be—a land of tribes. The variations of the soil, altitude, climate, ranging from the tropics of the Jordan Valley to the upland of the plateau of Judea and Galilee, explain how it was in older times that, with many

diverse races continually pouring into the land from parts of the world as different as Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt, and the Greek Islands, Palestine never became one nation. It would appear to be, *a priori,* no more hopeful now for a united Jewish state than it ever was. So profound a thinker as George Adam Smith has indeed pronounced the idea as "contrary to both nature and [here the clergyman speaks] to Scripture."

Nevertheless, when we saw the obviously growing and flourishing Jewish settlements in the Plain of Esdraelon, surrounded by gardens and fruit orchards; when we passed through fields planted with every kind of grain and vegetable; when we drove over the excellent new roads and realized that the newcomers had successfully drained the once dangerous bog-lands, which now presented to our delighted eyes the spectacle of herds of black cattle standing in the tall grasses and reeds that fringe the channelled streams; when we drove through the new and carefully tended plantations of trees of all sorts, we could not help realizing that the Zionist movement was, as they say in America, a "going concern." The hideous tin-can towns that have sprung up, as hideous as the names they have been given (among which is Balfouria, entirely in the Roman tradition of Caesarea, Adrianopolis, etc.), and the fierce "Nationalism" that lies at the

back of the movement, had combined to make Zionism of less interest to us than almost anything else in the land. But even to us it was a distinct pleasure to see the plain returning to fertility. Especially delightful were the new-planted trees. A fund, in fact, has been started called "The Men of the Trees Fund to Assist Afforestation in Palestine," and the appeal for money cannot but rouse the sympathy of anybody who has motored over the country. Not near Nazareth alone, where an embryo forest has been started, but even on the bare slopes of Judea the work is being carried on, and six hundred acres near Tiberias have been set aside for voluntary planting. Should this enterprise develop, it may alter the aspect of the land considerably and materially assist the Zionist experiment.

With all the probabilities of geography and history against them, animated by a patriotism that is no longer securely rooted in religion, hampered by the reimposition of a language dead for two thousand years, these extraordinary people are beginning to be successful colonists in the land of their dreams; the promised milk and honey begins to flow, Jehovah smiles upon them. Even we, sceptical as we were in the beginning, came away feeling that maybe, after all, the strange and difficult experiment would be rewarded with success. They are bound, in these days of the exacerbated "na-

tionality" of small races (another hypnotic phrase) to have trouble with the Arabs who claim that the land is "theirs." But the primitive culture of the natives, their incapacity to organize, their inability to develop the soil, must give the superior culture, the organization, and the industry of the Jews, although a minority in numbers, an ultimate predominance. It is almost as unthinkable that the shiftless wandering Bedouin should dam back the advancing tide of Western civilization as that the Red Indians should have stayed the invasion of America by Europe.[4]

THE LAKE OF GALILEE

Now, at last, we have started on the sixteen-mile road to Tiberias and the Lake of Galilee. We pass over rolling hills and after about half an hour's motoring reach Cana, some eight hundred feet below Nazareth. Here the children pester one to drink some of the famous water (but not now turned into wine), and in the Greek church which is supposed to stand on the site of the festal house we were shown large stone jars which were used on the occasion of the miracle. The Latin church near by, however, disputes the claim and shows rival water jars. Except for the associations of the place with Christ's first display of miraculous powers, the village has very little interest.

The road leads slowly down across a plateau

where we have again as at Mount Carmel a completely satisfactory view of the "carpet of wild flowers" so often mentioned in books of travel in Palestine. Great patches of blue and purple lupins, pink campion, yellow tansy, white flowers we cannot name, tall white hollyhocks and rosy flax, blue, pink, and yellow phlox, and large golden daisies, blue borrage and anchusa, yellow buttercups and wild mustard, the pale yellow primrose of Palestine, wild geraniums, lilac stock, mallows, campanulas, poppies, and many other flowers mingle their perfumes, while the honeysuckle, waving sweet scent around, overpowers them all. We long to recapture Solomon's famous botanical discourse to the Queen of Sheba when he spoke of trees "from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall."

Presently we spy the Horns of Hattin, two peaks on a lofty hill under which in 1187 Saladin defeated the Crusaders and extinguished their power in Palestine. For two days these heavily armoured Frankish marauders (in view of their doings in the Holy Land it is hard to call them by any other name) fought in the waterless plain, just under this hill. More peaceful, if less historical, is the scene said to have taken place on Mount Hattin where Christ fed the five thousand on a few loaves and fishes miraculously replenished. Less open to criticism is the legend which no impossibility contra-

dicts, that Christ uttered the Beatitudes on this hillside, although I fear the fierce and fighting Crusaders had for a time forgotten that He blessed the merciful and the peace-makers.

The road turned sharply to the right and conducted us down to Tiberias, lying nearly seven hundred feet below the level of the sea on the Lake of Galilee. Grassy slopes alternating with fields of grain surround what was once the most opulent of all the many flourishing towns that fringed the lake. It was rebuilt by Herod soon after the beginning of our era. All the other towns were destroyed by Titus and Vespasian, unconsciously carrying out the curse Christ laid upon them, but Tiberias, which had espoused the Roman side, was spared and made the capital of the province, and it is the one town left on the lake today, only the Dome of the Hot Baths not far away, a few houses at Magdala and a church at Capernaum giving further life to the shore. The Bible does not mention Christ ever having been in the town. The fortifications with their great bastions are now crumbling to ruins, the palaces and buildings of Herod have been torn down to make less stately edifices, and only fallen columns and occasional slabs of marble bear witness to the town's former grandeur.

After the destruction of Jerusalem, it became the centre of rabbinical learning, and the Talmud

was completed here. It still has its Jewish seminary, and we met young Jews in long coats with curled sidelocks walking, book in hand, committing to memory passages from the Talmud or from a collection of ancient traditions called the *Mishna*. But Safed, high up in the hills to the north of the lake, now takes the first place for that special brand of scholarship, thought, pedantry, and dogma. It is the centre for the study of the Cabala, and many of the Portuguese Jews, expelled from Spain, settled there. The first printing-press in Palestine was set up in Safed in 1563. These two towns, along with Jerusalem and Hebron, are the four Sacred Towns of the Jews, and the Talmud teaches that the world will return to its original chaos if prayers are not addressed to the God of Israel at least twice a week in each city.

We are told that in one respect at least Tiberias has not changed; the Arab saying that there the king of the fleas held his court has been endorsed by many travellers, but we, I must say, found the primitive Franciscan hostel for pilgrims fairly clean. We left our trunks there and drove along the shore making our way amid unfenced tobacco fields, patches of millet, cucumber, melons, rice and maize. The lovely lake is set in rounded hills with rugged mountains rising at the northern end and rolling backwards and upwards towards the white summit of Mount Hermon, clad in dazzling

snow, hanging ethereally in the sky. A peace that we had not known since we reached Jerusalem stole over us. Here, as at Assisi, the impression of a gentle Spirit seems to pervade the landscape.

Our goal was Capernaum, which has been excavated and where as much order as may be has been put into the four acres of its ruins by the German Oriental Society. I heard the voice of one of the kindly Franciscan friars explaining in different parts of the enclosure the ancient ruins, but I could not tear myself away from contemplation of a graceful and glorious edifice of golden limestone of which much is left standing. Although entirely Greek in character, it appears to have been the central chamber of a great synagogue. It is surrounded by a colonnade, the architrave of which has a second row of columns; most of the bases of the columns are still *in situ* bearing monolithic shafts that are topped with delicate Corinthian capitals. The architrave and frieze of the main façade are richly ornamented with foliage and conventional designs. The fallen parts of this synagogue were also very interesting, being beautifully carved and containing some curious decorative motifs, among them a wheeled chariot.

We had tea under some trees drooping over the edge of the lake, and as we were sitting there we noticed the water covered with what looked like

dark, open shells appearing and disappearing in a strange way. It took us some time to discover that they were fishes putting out their mouths, like the fishes listening to the sermon of St. Anthony. Every now and then one would leap up into the air, causing the disappearance of all the mouths around it. The lake is apparently enormously rich in fish, but the ancient industry of supplying foreign markets with salted fish, from which Joseph of Arimathea derived his wealth, has not yet been revived. During the Turkish rule there was a tax put not only on boats but also on fishing, and the fishermen were reduced to such strange straits that they took to throwing poisoned bread into the water and then going in naked to gather up the dead fish. We saw a blue and red kingfisher watching out for his prey and two big birds lazily flapping their wings over the water; grebes and gulls are said to abound there, and quail, storks, plovers, and tern were all bagged by the enthusiastic Dean Tristram on his visit to the lake. We did not pay the endemoniated swine the honour of a visit to Gadara as this town lies inland away from the lake, with no slope for the beasts to rush down, and the site of that peculiar miracle has now been fixed elsewhere, the amended reading substituting Gergesa for Gadara.

We then turned back to Tiberias, passing the little village of Magdala—a name forever associ-

ated with one of the most loving and enthusiastic of Christ's followers. The lake at this sunset hour took on the hues of a great opal, its colours changing from blues to greens of all hues, melting into turquoise, amethyst, and olive, while the hills around passed from luminous transparency to deep indigo and purple. On our right rose the steep cliffs, in whose caves falcons and ravens have supplanted the formidable bands of robbers that two thousand years ago terrorized the lake-side.

We reached Tiberias at dusk and after an extremely frugal supper went out onto the roof to watch the moon rise over the steep cliffs of Apheca on the opposite side of the lake and throw its silver bars upon the rippling water. A Spanish Franciscan friar came and sat with us and discoursed of the flocks of pilgrims who come to see where Christ passed the first years of His ministry and gathered His Disciples.

THE ROAD TO BANYAS

We were awakened early on the morning of April 26 by the loud crowing of cocks (recalling St. Peter!) as well as by the light and an unusual number of flies aroused to activity by it. I stole out onto the terrace and saw again that marvellous play of colour that seems to belong to this sacred lake. I began to feel, I confess, very exhilarated at the thought that today I should leave the Holy

Land with all its insoluble problems, and I was glad that the last impression was so healing and peaceful, although it could not efface the heart-rending and indecent scenes of hatred and intolerance which stain the Christianity of Jerusalem. My imagination began to free itself for the enjoyment of art and nature, undisturbed, as I hoped, by the religious and ethical difficulties that pressed upon me in Judea.

We started early and stopped just outside the town at the Tomb of Maimonides, the greatest of the Jewish mediaeval Doctors. The guardian made us write our names on a scrap of paper to be pushed between the railings of the tomb. Leaving the magic to work on our behalf, we began to climb up the hills of Galilee that frame on the west the uppermost Valley of the Jordan, a district of which the Israelitish spies reported: "We have seen the land and behold, it is very good; a place where there is no want of anything that is on earth" (Judges 18: 9-10). Fertile and well watered as it is, it would answer completely, save for the Arab blight, to the description which Moses gave of it to the desert-parched children of Israel: "The Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks, of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of the valleys and hills . . . a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil, olive and honey."

This valley was the scene of many an ancient battle, from the raid of Abraham to rescue his nephew, Lot, and Joshua's routing of the combined forces of the Canaanites, Ammonites, Hittites, Jebusites and Hivites (old tribe-names that chant themselves like a litany in the memory of every Protestant child). Here the Danites, stealing up by night, destroyed the luxurious dwellers in Laish, razed their town and rebuilt it as Dan, the northern limit of the Israelites (not a child but knows the phrase "from Dan to Beersheba"). The last of the local wars described in the Bible was the one of Joab against Sheba, "the man of Belial," whose head was thrown out to the besiegers by "a wise woman" of the town, who preferred the assassination of one to the slaughter of many.

Our road descended and crossed this historic valley and then climbed steeply up among the Jaulan hills on the east side, descending again further north to reach Banyas on the edge of the plain.

MEMORIES OF PALESTINE

Part of this road was not overwhelmingly interesting and I employed my time trying to put our Palestine experiences into perspective. Young memories are wasteful, storing away every impression and making no attempt at selection, but at a certain age you realize what a precious and frail

thing memory is, and you become careful not to overburden it with irrelevant matter. I have a habit when travelling of deciding on the scenes and objects that, for my own intimate purposes as a lover of beauty, I feel it imperative to remember; and so, in leaving Palestine, I fixed on a few "sacred, not-to-be-forgotten sights," allowing a certain margin for agreeable but less essential mental pictures. Faithful to art, though I am not sure that I do not prefer nature to art, I endeavoured to impress upon my memory, first of all, the "Blue Mosque" of Jerusalem and the wide tranquil enclosure in which it stands, and grouped about this the smaller buildings in the enclosure, especially the glorious "Golden Gate"; next to this the façade of the Holy Sepulchre and some of the details of the interior. Then I tried to see in imagination and fix in my memory the interior of the church at Bethlehem; the walls of the mosque at Hebron; the Tower of Ramleh; the ruins at Jerash; the theatre at Amman; the Palace of M'Shatta; the walls and gates of Jerusalem; the capitals at Nazareth, the Greek remains of the synagogue at Capernaum. Then I thought of certain aspects of nature, or nature and art combined, such as the view from the Mount of Olives; Mount Carmel and Mount Tabor—these are sacred spots not only to believers in the Bible but to the modern pilgrim whose god is beauty; the peaceful enclosed

valley that we looked down on from Amwas; the Vale of Hebron, the view from the monastery above Abraham's oak; the Ghor, and the view of it from the old road to Jerusalem; the Dead Sea; the winding road to Jerash; the road from Jerusalem to Nablus; the view from the town of Samaria; the fertile Plain of Esdraelon; the slopes of Nazareth; the Lake of Galilee; the upper Valley of the Jordan overtopped by snowy Hermon; all these scenes I hope to remember while memory is left me. And I began to feel, as I could not in the midst of the sordidness of the cult as practised at Jerusalem, the immense pathos of the spectacle with all its implications.

BANYAS

The lonely mountain o'er,
And the resounding shore
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring and dale
Edged with poplar pale
The parting genius is with sighing sent.
With flower—inwoven tresses torn,
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

—MILTON

A newly made mountain road sweeps down under the shadow of Mount Hermon to Banyas. We saw to our right across a deep gorge *Kal'at-en-Namrud* (Nimrod's Castle), one of the best

preserved and largest of the Crusading fastnesses in Syria. This castle was always thought to have been Herodian until Renan noticed that diagonal dressing of stones characteristic of the Crusaders' masonry. It lies picturesquely along the irregular hilltop, holding it in a vital grip, and from it, the reliable Baedeker says, the view is one of the finest in Syria. We had to take this on faith, for time did not permit us to climb up there, but we could well believe the statement, as the view we got from the lower terrace of the same mountain was almost unsurpassable. The spring that gushes out of the steep limestone cliff in a hundred rivulets of sparkling water foams down the valley creating a wild tangle of green as it goes. It is often called the principal source of the Jordan, though two other streams unite with it in the valley to form the river, one, El Leddan, being three times as large as the Banyas stream. The sight is so admirably described by Lady Sybil Lubbock that, having gained her permission, I will quote a paragraph from her charming book:

Of all the places that we came to in our wandering I have no doubt that this was the most beautiful. The great cliff with its decoration of delicate ferns and dripping moss, the abundant waters, the carpet of emerald grass, the sacred groves of olives and tall oak, all combined to produce an effect of wild and yet tender loveliness, which the associations of the site rendered a hundred times more memorable. Had we wished to

combine all the elements of beauty and romance in a single place we could not have found one richer or more lovely than the spot where we now stood.

Herod the Great erected a temple over this spring, and it was among its fallen columns, lulled by the musical rush of the down-plunging rills, that we lunched and rested. Josephus, we thought, rightly called this "a place of great pleasure—famous and delightful." Philip the Tetrarch, son of Herod the Great, changed the name of the town of Banyas, which still stands, reduced to a small village, on the terrace above the stream and opposite the cliff from which it gushes, to that of Caesarea Philippi. Although we had crossed the frontier from Palestine into Syria I found that the Christian associations that had troubled me could not be left entirely behind, for it was in this very town that Jesus first clearly announced His mission:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Alas, it was here also (or thus Mark and Luke report it, perhaps reading back into the event later

traditions and beliefs) that Jesus planted in the minds of His disciples the expectation of a material kingdom of God that should shortly be established upon earth—prototype of so many of the foolish and fanatical delusions which have developed continuously since Christ at Banyas uttered the words: "Verily I say unto you that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God."

It was with relief that we turned our thoughts to Pan's grotto in the rock wall above the gushing fountains. Pan, for whose worship we have no shadow of responsibility! Plutarch, calling the place Panias, recounts the legend that at the moment of Christ's birth the statues of Pan and the Nymphs which graced this shrine fell and shivered, with a moan resounding over land and water, while the cry "Great Pan is dead" swept across the Mediterranean and was heard by mariners on the sea.[5] We found the mouth of the sanctuary almost closed by fallen rocks and débris, but we climbed up and looked in, and there we saw a group of little calves, cuddling together like lonely children, put there evidently to be in safety while their mothers were scrambling in search of food round the precipitous mountain side. They could not get out without help, but before we left the herdsmen had lifted them all out, and they were trailing

along behind the herd on the soft grassy slopes that led to the village.

On the face of the cliff above the cavern stands a small chapel cut in the rock, with a rustic porch where the draped tomb of a Moslem saint is enshrined. Here we sat looking over the Assisi-like upper valley of the Jordan with its gentle contours enclosing the softly rolling green plain. It was with reluctance that we finally came away. Had we been camping, which is perhaps the best way to enjoy the landscape in this enchanting land, we should have stayed on many days, for only three or four other spots that we know are as lovely as this place. My husband and I thought: "Here will we come back and live the ideal life."

All day long we had never for a moment lost touch with the monarch of all the mountains in these lands, Mount Hermon, *Jebel-esh-Sheik,* the "Ruler of the White Hair," from earliest times the holiest of the "High places," covered with ancient temples, and still earlier circles of stones for the worship of Baal and Allathi (Astarte) and the Damascene Syrian god of the weather, Hadad. It is often mentioned in the Old Testament—"Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name." It took possession of us from the moment of starting, when it hung cloud-like above us, to our noonday halt nestling in its arms at Banyas where the Jordan gushes out. Shortly before we reached Damascus

the hills of the Anti-Lebanon hid it from our eyes, yet we did not lose the feeling of its gracious and mighty presence, for its snows, melting into streams, are the source of the towns' very existence. We longed to climb to the top of it; but it was only just as we were leaving Damascus that we found out that it was not the "very fatiguing" expedition that Baedeker discouragingly describes, but a feasible, almost easy thing to do, if one is prepared to camp over night near the summit.

CHAPTER VII

DAMASCUS

THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

THE road to Damascus[1] turned north soon after we had climbed up from Banyas and entered the basalt plain which stretches at the back of Mount Hermon, whose snowy slopes seemed almost near enough to touch. The rest of the Anti-Lebanon ran along on the left, while on the right a blue stream, fringed with trees spreading out into meadows on both sides, led us all the way to the city. The refrain of "Abana and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus" had been singing in our minds for many days, and here at last was the famous Pharphar, which later joins forces with the no less famous Abana (now called Barada) that comes through the gorge behind Damascus, to fight together a losing fight with the desert and finally to fling themselves abroad in streams and die away in a large marsh. Over the green of this marsh you see from Damascus at sunset the low amethyst hills, twenty-five miles off, that stand on the edge of the desert; beyond them there is nothing but rolling waste and the long ways to Palmyra and Baghdad. It is this sense of mysterious distance

beyond the horizon that lends to the Syrian desert its peculiar poetry and enchantment. Other deserts look much the same to the eye. For sixty miles or more around Saragossa the earth has the same aspect as what one sees looking east from Damascus. But on the fringe of the Spanish desert the life we know begins again—we are at once in Europe—whereas the Syrian desert stretches for days of journeying across the Euphrates and the Tigris and goes on to lands of romance and mystery, to Arabia and Persia, to India and China.

DAMASCUS

Damascus is the mole on the cheek of beauty—the plumage of the peacock of Paradise—the brilliant neck of the ring-dove—and the collar of beauty.

—*From an old Arabic poem*

A turn in the road gave us our first glimpse of Damascus, rosy, translucent and fairy-like in the midst of its green oasis, seen at just the lucky moment when the sunset light illuminated its many minarets.

The Franciscan hostel at Tiberias touched, we thought, the limit of squalor, until we reached our hotel at Damascus, where the squalor was not simple and unpretentious but a filthy, decayed Turkish-bath squalor. Better to have no bathroom than one which smells and where the bath leaks;

better to have uneatable simple food than uneatable elaborate food. I must in fairness except the Turkish coffee, always good in the Near East, and the fruit. There are twenty different kinds of apricots that grow in Damascus. Tiberias was reasonably quiet, except for the cocks that crowed, while in Damascus automobiles and trams did their best in the crowded streets to drown the loud cries of humanity.

I fear that this started us wrong, for Damascus was something of a disillusionment. Perhaps we expected too much, for no town has ever been more praised in literature: even Mahomet when, on his travels, he came near Damascus, refused to enter its gates, saying, "Man has only one Paradise, and mine is above." It was, however, anything but a paradise for us, oppressed as we were by continual scirocco, kept awake at night by street noises, overwhelmed by the sense of the many things we had too little time to see. On April 28 I wrote: "We are killing ourselves seeing mosques and tombs, and are, on the whole, disappointed. They have fallen into such squalid ruin that sheer disgust is often the first impression upon entering the courtyard of a mosque or penetrating into the interior of a palace. The town, too, is not half so picturesque as Jerusalem for types and costumes. Bedouins from the Desert there are here also *fières et malpropres,* as Barrès described them, and

the black Senegalese soldiers, with their scarlet caps and sashes add a note of beautiful exoticism unseen in the English Mandate, but most of the people on the street are dressed in shabby, ill-worn European clothes." Like Aladdin, the Syrian has changed his old lamp for a modern one, and the results are disastrous to his picturesqueness and beauty. The Syrians themselves have an allegory for the people who look so lordly in their native dress but become, somehow, unpresentable in the European clothes they more and more affect. "The Arabs call the raven the *crooked walker.* The raven once hopped gracefully like a bird. One day it saw a gazelle and began at once to try to walk like the gazelle. Now it walks as you see—neither like one nor the other. And that is what these Europeanized Syrians are—*crooked walkers.*"

Nevertheless, we did feel an inescapable sense of alluring mystery in the walls and leafy gardens that hide the dwellings of the rich.

GEOGRAPHY

But more should be said about the town in which they are enframed. The Paradise of the East, the oldest and for long periods the most important town in the whole country, cannot be dismissed in a few disillusioned words and a sentimental speculation or two. Yet it has been so often described

that I dare not of myself undertake a fresh description. After all, *we* come to it not parched for water, not over lonely deserts, not unaccustomed to the green of trees, and we cannot expect to feel the rapture at the mere sight of streams and orchards and houses that the traveller from the desert feels. I will allow myself to quote an early author, writing in 1736, who pays his quaint tribute in the following words:

The Beauty and Convenience of the City is owing to seven little Rivers, which, as one may say, are under its command. These rivers bestow Verdure and Fertility on the Plain of Damascus, which they cross; and on the Gardens about the Town, which they water. They supply the public Fountains of the City, whereof almost every Street has one. There is not a House, however inconsiderable, but what has one of its own, running out of a marble basin, whereby the Neatness of the City may be judged of.[2]

And I cannot refrain from adding the often quoted description in *Eothen* of the town:

A city of hidden palaces, of copses and gardens and fountains and bubbling streams. The juice of her life is the gushing and ice-cold torrent that bubbles from the snowy side of the Anti-Lebanon. Close along at the river's edge through seven sweet miles of nestling boughs and deepest shade, the city spreads out her noble length as a man falls flat, face forward, on the brook that he may drink and drink again;

so Damascus, thirsting for ever, lies down with her lips to the stream and clings to its rushing waters.[3]

Damascus is said to be the oldest city in the world and is certainly the most enduring. The centre of one of the great trade routes, she is barred from the sea by two ranges of snowy mountains, but lies defenceless before the desert which stretches on to the East without limit. Conquered by Nineveh, Babylon, and Memphis, supplanted by Antioch and Baghdad, she nevertheless endures while they are forgotten, owing her indestructible life to the fact that she is the "harbour of refuge upon the earliest sea man ever learned to manage." She is the nearest Mediterranean city to the Far East and is thus the Western point of departure for Mecca.

Geographically, then, and spiritually, Damascus is indispensable to the great countries of the Orient. And nature has endowed this first and greatest oasis of the desert with its fairest gifts. The land is too high to be marshy although so plentifully watered. Its hundred and fifty-odd square miles of verdure, as you look down on them from the nearby heights, are like a dense forest bearing in its bosom a few pearly domes and frail minarets; but when you are in the forest you see it is carefully planted in gardens and orchards of apricots, peaches, figs, pistachios, plums, pome-

granates and walnuts, while grassy meadows and fields of grain, vineyards, gardens, parks and even cemeteries spread themselves among the thickets.

HISTORY

To give a detailed account of the political history of Damascus is far beyond my powers and is in fact outside the purpose of this book, but the mere mention of some of the principal names connected with the town creates a background of fascination and excitement upon which, as against an echoing rock adding volume and overtones to every sound, each object of beauty gains an added significance. Its early history seems remarkably confused, consisting of alliances and then enmities with the Israelites, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Arabs. Abraham is said to have lived there for some years on his way from Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan, and later he defeated the armies of Chedorlaomer near the town. In Genesis 15:2 he says that his steward Eliezer is a native of Damascus, and early historians relate that the name of Abraham "is still famous in the country." After Alexander's conquest the land was assigned to his general, Seleucus, and the Kingdom of the Seleucids lasted, with some brief interruptions by Armenian and Persian conquests, till it was annexed by Rome. Under Pompey, in 65 B.C., Syria became a Roman province and under Trajan Damas-

cus was converted into a Roman provincial city. St. Paul saw his momentous vision on the way there, and one is shown the house from the window of which he escaped his Jewish persecutors. Herod embellished the town with some of the buildings it was his passion to put up, and the Emperors Theodosius and Justinian left their seal upon the city in Christian basilicas. But the greatest splendour of Damascus begins with its conquest by the Arabs in the seventh century and its development under the Omaiyades. Although succeeding dynasties made Baghdad their capital, the city continued to flourish. From 1126 for about fifty years on, the Crusaders stormed and re-stormed the town, being finally driven away by Nurredin who surrounded it with new fortifications and built mosques. A last isolated attack by the Franks was threatened in 1177 but it was averted by the skill of the vice-regent of Saladin, and Damascus became Saladin's headquarters during his further expeditions against the Crusaders. In 1260 it was taken by Hulugu at the head of his Mongols, and afterwards it fell to the Mameluke rulers of Egypt; the great Beybars, Herod's imitator as a passionate builder, made over and strengthened the citadel of Damascus, but in 1300 the Tartars came and plundered and burned down many of the buildings. Later, that Mongol butcher, Tamerlane, sacked the town and murdered

most of the inhabitants, and carried off all the famous armourers of Damascus, who since then have practised their art at Samarkand and Khorasin. In 1516 the Turkish Sultan Selim took possession of the city, and it remained in the hands of the Turks until the end of the Great War. The French Mandate which followed as a result of the War had been preceded, in 1860, by the dispatch to Syria of a French corps of ten thousand men to protect the Christians who had been massacred up to the number of six thousand in Damascus alone.[4]

I know this account is brief, second-hand and amateurish, but there must be other travellers like myself, intelligent, but not too intelligent, superficially curious, vaguely learned, easily moved by the poetry of names, who like to weave around the present joys of travel some of the more romantic associations of history. The cup of pleasure seems richer to the taste when it holds the past in solution. As I now luxuriously chew over the cud of the hastily snatched and unpalatable provender of Baedeker, I dream as a cow in its stall may dream of fields and streams, of the past of Damascus. Cloudy figures float by in my imagination—Abraham, Israelitish Kings, Solomon, Jeroboam, Ahaz, long-bearded Assyrian monarchs, Darius, Pompey, Herod the Great, the Byzantine emperors and Patriarchs, Frankish Crusaders, John of Damascus, Arabs, Tartars, and Mamelukes, the great

Omaiyades, Nurredin, Saladin, Beybars from Egypt, Armenian Tigranus, Tamerlane—hiding the sordidness of the modern town behind their floating draperies and drowning the hooting of motors with the clash of their arms.

THE GRAND MOSQUE

Nevertheless, I am glad to turn to topics where I am more at home—to the monuments of beauty that still remain in Damascus, and the even lovelier views that are to be had.

Our most overwhelming surprise was the eighth century mosaic decoration in the entrance to the Grand Mosque and along one side of its courtyard, for this, being still in the process of resurrection from its winding sheet of whitewash, had not yet become the common property of students.* These mosaics alone are worth a visit to Damascus. They are even more interesting than the mosaics in the "Blue Mosque" in Jerusalem, for they are more varied in subject and composition. There the mosaics are purely decorative—

* Since this was written, copies and photographs of these mosaics have been exhibited in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Sept. Oct. 1929), and they have been reproduced in many of the illustrated papers of Europe and America. An *Extrait des Monuments et Mémoires,* published by the French Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres (Paris, Leroux, 1930) contains a learned study of these mosaics by M. Eustache de Lorey, and a valuable discussion by Mademoiselle Marguérite de Berchem as to the artificers employed to execute them, whom, from the study of many documents, she regards as probably Syrians and not artists sent from Byzantium.

vases, conventional flowers, and ornamental designs —while here we found tall waving trees, realistic plants, views of houses and gardens and towns, as well as decorative motifs. M. Lucien Cavro who, under M. de Lorey, has been recovering these mosaics, pointed out some views of fantastic buildings of mixed classical and Arab character with leaf roofs which no doubt represented the cafés along the river Barada, for meandering streams are figured in the foreground. All the mosaics exhibit an amazing delicacy of shading recalling the best frescoes at Pompeii, or even the matchless paintings of a garden in the Villa Livia at Rome. They carry on without a doubt the Hellenistic tradition of representation. Some of the finest trees, with their shadows in mauve and light pink, curiously anticipate, as do those at the Villa Livia at Rome, the paintings of Cézanne!

When these mosaics ran round the whole enclosure, and were continued, first on the outside of the almost classic building in the courtyard called the "Dome of the Treasure," * and then on the inside of the church, where only a few fragments now remain, it must have been one of the most gorgeous sights on the face of the earth. Five hun-

* A small domed structure standing on eight antique columns which are partly buried by the rise of three and a half feet in the pavement of the court. It was perhaps a sacred well in antiquity, like its mate at Hama, and is now used for the Mosque archives. Ali of Herat in 1173 said that it was pointed out to him as the Tomb of Ayishah,

dred and seven metres of mosaic have already been brought to light, but it seems improbable, unfortunately, that much more can be recovered, for the hand of man has worked more ruin than the hand of time. The art of making the glass cubes, or *tessere,* of which these early mosaics were composed, fell into decay and was lost, so that when later designers were called on to decorate with mosaic the tomb of Beybars (which is now used as a library) they could do no better than steal the *tessere* from the mosque. Their work in the tomb is much rougher in execution, but in design it follows the tradition of six centuries before.

Aside from the mosaics, a few columns and capitals, and the beautiful minaret on the southwest side of the court, a masterpiece of Arabo-Egyptian style put up by Keitbey in 1483, the Grand Mosque was a disappointment to us—all the more so as we had come to it expecting another building at least equal in beauty to the Jerusalem mosque. It was extravagantly praised in olden times, and one never takes account of the destruction that overtakes buildings famous in literature until one's eyes have seen it. A Greek temple to Zeus originally stood

the favourite wife of Mahomet. A few lovely remains of mosaics on its outer walls have been recovered. It is on this building that the famous Greek inscription was carved: "Thy Kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting Kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations," and the Mahometans have never taken the trouble to remove or change it.

there, and this was converted at the end of the fourth century into a basilica by Theodosius and given its name of the Church of St. John, because it contained a casket with one of the heads of the Baptist. For several generations after the Arabian conquest the Christians worshipped in one part of the long building and the Moslems in another, but at the beginning of the eighth century the Christians were deprived of this privilege. Then what must have been the most sumptuous of all mosques was erected. The architects were Greek; twelve hundred artists were summoned from Constantinople to assist in the decoration; antique columns were collected from Syrian towns; the pavement was laid down and the lower walls covered with rare marbles; the upper walls and the court were made resplendent with mosaics; the prayer niches were inlaid with precious stones; and from the gilded wooden ceiling six hundred golden lamps hung down. I will quote one of the ancient descriptions of this gorgeous edifice, that of Mukkadasi in 995:

The Mosque of Damascus is the finest of any that the Moslems now hold, and nowhere is there collected together more magnificence. Its outer walls are built of square stones accurately set and of large size, and crowning the walls are splendid battlements. The columns supporting the roof of the Mosque consist of black polished pillars in a triple row, and set widely

apart. In the centre of the building, in the space over the Mihrab is a great dome. Round the court are lofty colonnades (arcades), above are the arched windows, and the whole area is paved with white marble. The (inner) walls of the Mosque, for twice the height of a man, are faced with variegated marbles, and above this, even to the very ceiling, are mosaics of various colours and in gold, showing figures of trees and towns and beautiful inscriptions, all most exquisitely and finely worked, and rare are the trees and few are the well-known towns that will not be found figured on these walls. The capitals are gold and the vaulting above the arcades is everywhere ornamented in mosaic. The columns round the court are all of white marble, while the walls that enclose it are adorned in mosaic with Arabesque designs. The roof is everywhere overlaid with lead and the battlements on both sides are faced with mosaic work. . . . On the summit of the dome of the Mosque is an orange, above it a pomegranate, both in gold. But the most wonderful of the sights here worthy of remark is verily the setting of the various coloured marbles and how the veining in each follows from that of its neighbour. It is said that the Khalif al Walid, in order to construct the mosaics, brought skilled workmen from Persia, India, Western Africa and Byzantium, spending thereon the whole revenue of Syria for two years, as well as eighteen shiploads of gold and silver which came from Cyprus.

Yakub, writing about a century earlier, gives an anecdote about this great builder of the mosque with which anyone who has ever undertaken build-

ing operations will sympathize: "The accounts of the expenditure were brought to him on the backs of eighteen camels, but he ordered them all to be burnt."

In 1189 the mosque was partly destroyed by fire, in 1400 Tamerlane wrecked and burned it, and finally the great fire of 1893 destroyed nearly all that was left, even the marble columns being calcined. All its magnificence is thus only a memory, or rather a legend.

Not far from the mosque is the Tomb of Saladin, less interesting than we expected, for the sarcophagus is comparatively modern. We were surprised to see, in a recess in the wall, a bronze wreath sent by William of Germany bearing the incongruous inscription: "Verily the Lord loveth His saints." The gift was less ingratiating than was intended, for the small cross hanging from the wreath nearly provoked a revolution.

The most impressive architectural feature that now remains is the Triumphal Arch, recently cleared of the squalid hovels that had clustered round it. This, with the row of columns that once led up to the temple-mosque, are said to have been the work of the most famous of all Syrian architects, Apollodorus, who designed the Forum of Trajan at Rome.[5] Nothing in Damascus comes up to these ruined fragments. The mighty hand of Greco-Roman antiquity, wherever it is laid on

these lands, leaves a mark as of a great giant's fist, smashing to insignificance all later achievements.

SALAMANIYEH MOSQUE

More perfect in its way than the Grand Mosque, because, though dilapidated, it has not been restored, is the grand court of the Salamaniyeh Mosque, with its rich Arab portals, its blue and green glazed minaret, the antique columns, six of them black, which partly enclose the court, the basin of water and the trees. No less lovely is the small Medressa, or school, beside it, which recalls some of the most delicate early Renaissance courtyards. A sense of peace envelops one in these deserted and neglected enclosures, with their harmonious spaces and sober but exquisite decoration, and in them the romantic traveller will love to linger if he is not, like ourselves, hurried onward by the gadfly of archaeological curiosity.

BAZAARS

Most of the books on Damascus dwell at great length on the bazaars, but as I abhor shopping of every description and detest mingling with a crowd, even a picturesque one, it takes but a swift walk through any *Souk* to give me more than enough. The Damascus bazaars are considerably modernized as to architecture, the old covering of tattered matting, through which burning drops of

sunshine would fall on the bright-robed forms and the many-coloured shops below, having been largely replaced by roofs of corrugated iron, and the wares displayed for sale are chiefly what you may see in any street of shops anywhere. But of course they do remain picturesque: strange forms jostle and crowd in passing along the dusky arcades: sheiks, merchants, Holy Men in turbans, Persians with high caps and almond eyes, veiled figures of women, beautiful children playing in the maze of the crowd, donkeys piled high with green almonds and a few oranges on top to give a note of colour, camels with their level-lidded eyes and swaying necks padding softly along, pyramids of orange-blossom and rose petals, scents and odours of musk and aloe, opium and attar of roses; and it appears that good bargains can still be picked up by the knowing. We were struck by the great number of one-eyed men we met and were told that it was not uncommon for a mother to destroy in childhood one eye of her son to avoid his conscription.

What was to us most worth seeing was an old khan or two (hostels for merchants and their wares) which you pass into from the bazaar streets through large Arab doorways. Inside one finds comparative quiet and peace, and the beauty of large courts with trees and running water, surrounded with colonnades carrying deep shadowed

loggie where, in the dancing light, bales are loaded onto and unloaded from camels, asses, and mules. The As'ad Pascha Khan, built in the seventeenth century in pure Moorish style, is the most beautiful, but all are worth looking into.

SALEHIYEH

We found the dusty hill-suburb of Salehiyeh full of fascinating remains; here a half ruined mosque with an overgrown court and fountain; there a *maristan,* or lunatic asylum, turned into a slum; here the remains of a stalactite ceiling and, behind closed doors and through alleyways heaped with rubbish, some of the most delicate stone lace-work we had ever seen. These things we should scarcely have found out for ourselves, but our friend, M. de Lorey, of the Azim Palace—himself absent excavating in Mesopotamia—sent his young architect, M. Lucien Cavro, to guide us. He seemed to love every ancient stone in the town and yet to realize that we were travellers who wanted to see only the beautiful ones. But even to see these was not easy. The Arabs never restore anything, so only unconsidered fragments are left, and the courtyards through which M. Cavro guided us were sometimes so filthy that we hesitated to set foot in them. Backed by the government which, alas! lacks the money to spend on them all that is needed, M. Cavro, under M. de Lorey's guidance,

is doing everything he can to preserve the fine bits that remain.

We also climbed the bare brown hill (*"couleur de chameau"* as Barrès says) behind the town and, fortified by the usual cup of tea, we reached the lovely, open, domed building on the top, where the old road from Damascus took its first turn to the coast. Through its arches we got a magnificent view of the city amid the ambrosial shade of endless groves and gardens in which it stands, "a forest of sparkling minarets in the billowy beauty of endless foliage." A former traveller says of this view: "Henceforth, when you are called to tell, as all travellers are, the most beautiful object you have seen in your wanderings, you will answer, 'Damascus from the Salehijeh'." [6]

The desert land stretched away to the Hauran mountains on the south. On the other side we looked into the rugged masses of the Anti-Lebanon, while the deep valley of the Barada lay between us and the snowy range that marches towards Mount Hermon.

CEMETERY

M. Cavro took us, after our long exploration, to have tea on the roof of a pavilion which overlooked the Moslem burial ground where two of Mahomet's wives and his daughter, Fatima, repose. The scirocco which jaded our senses was from here a

delight to the eyes, spreading a faint mist which the sunset tinted with all the colours of an opal, over the desolate expanse of tottering headstones and ruinous but beautiful little monuments in the cemetery. After tea the still faintly energetic members of the party went to see the Tomb of Fatima, but I remained, sticking like a limpet to the roof, passively enjoying the changing colours of the sky and the cool green of the garden of fruit trees behind the house, listening to the only nightingale I heard in Damascus singing to the soft laughter of unseen water. This was Damascus as I had dreamed it!

FESTIVAL OF ST. GEORGE

On St. George's Day all the Orthodox Greeks and the Greek Uniates thronged to this saint's church, and very early in the morning, contrary to my habits, I joined the throng. I threaded alleys festooned with green, and garlanded with flowers; village by village the worshippers marched, or rather danced and yelled their way along, while the spectators showered flower-petals upon them from carpet-hung balconies. The faces of the dancers, their yells, and some of the costumes seemed almost those of savages. At times the crowd was roughly pushed back, and two men in the clearing leapt at each other with scimitars and cymbals, springing up and down, while the crowd

of men at the edge of the space circled about them holding their scimitars in the air and pounding with their feet.

EZ-AZIM

One night we were invited to Ez-Azim, the Official Residence, to hear some Arab music in the garden. We sat by a big tank overhung by willows and palms, looking across it to an enormous arched recess in the palace walls where some magnificently clothed Arabs danced and sang and gave a display of sword dexterity. Aromatic coffee was served, and then sherbet was handed round. Finally an Arab came and sat on the edge of the pool and sang desert songs, which sounded to our ears like complaints and expostulations mingled with sharp cries of indignation. When we were satiated with this music and had begun to converse among ourselves, the singer suddenly vanished in the shadows.

DERVISHES

Then the extremely kind Secretary, M. Doumar, took us to see the Dervishes who spend every Monday evening (for Mahomet was born on a Monday) turning round and round and howling. Only the Residency and its guests are allowed to look on, and I wonder that they permit even that, for it was not a ceremonial function, such as takes

place in mosques, but just the ordinary routine of the day, assisted by a few local enthusiasts. The room had a small fountain in the middle, and our incongruous chairs and still more incongruous persons took up the whole of one side. At right angles to us stood a fierce crowd of Syrians with a small boy in their midst singing a wandering ritornelle through his little nose, in a wonderful high, shrill voice. The other two sides of the room were occupied by rows of terrible looking men in trousers and shirts, seemingly diseased and half insane, who at the command of a jolly looking Dervish standing by the fountain, kept time to the whines he squeezed out of his face and to the boy's singing, stamping and bowing and jerking their bodies to right and left, faster and faster as they went on, growling like wild beasts, and uttering truly awful sounds, such as among us are only heard on the Channel in a storm. This seemed to throw them into an ecstasy, and I daresay they usually fall down in fits before dawn. The greater part of the whirling Dervishes had finished their first turn, but there remained a small boy of about six, son of the director, who gyrated almost without stopping. He was dressed in bright green with a sort of ballet skirt and a tall cap. His eyes were squinted inwards and he looked very solemn and absorbed. Another lad of about seventeen came out, dressed in white, with a tall cap on his head.

He had a long oval face with large languishing eyes, and as he twirled he laid his head upon his arm and seemed to go to sleep, but not so soundly as to forget his own lascivious beauty. He contributed considerably to the general ecstasy of the stamping and howling chain of men. In the midst of it all they served us coffee, and the seductive boy suddenly ceased turning, lighted a cigarette and had a cup of coffee too. Then he began again. We did not get back to the hotel till past midnight, *and none of us slept.*

CHAPTER VIII

EXCURSIONS FROM DAMASCUS

MALOULA

BEFORE finally leaving Damascus, we made two interesting excursions. On April 28 we started out along the Palmyra road. Every moment of the drive was enchanting. At first we passed through the green gardens and fruit orchards of the long stretched-out oasis, with clear green streams edging the road, and filling the air with the sound of their running. Then, little by little, the trees gave place to fields of grain and patches of vegetables, and finally we were driving through the stony desert. But to compensate, we had the Anti-Lebanon range close on our left, the reddish plain sweeping up in swift slopes to the limestone rocks that crown the hills, defying the sky like a giant wall with fortresses and towers. A half ruined old khan stood at a crossroad, an hour or so along the way, picturesque in its unprotesting decay, the refuge of a few goat-keeping families who gathered about the well as if composing especially for us a Biblical picture. Our road turned off there sharply to the west and began to ascend the foothills. To our right a line of pop-

lars and willows betrayed the presence of a vivifying stream, the narrow valley widening here and there, thus giving space for cultivation—fruit trees, grain, pasture lands. After half an hour we reached the valley head, a large green amphitheatre surrounded on three sides by steep cliffs, against which was plastered an exquisitely white village, with graceful domes and deep balconies climbing one on top of the other on walls and fortifications of an early date. Such was the rock-bound little Christian town of Maloula, which has remained true to its faith through all the centuries and in face of the most savage persecutions and massacres and attempts to drive the inhabitants from their mountain home. Even in our own days they have been attacked, their neighbours, I fancy, having quite as much admiration for their fertile oasis as contempt for their religion. I suspect the inhabitants of this little mountain oasis of being rather obstinately conservative, for even yet they have not given up speaking Aramaic, though it has been replaced by Arabic and Turkish and French almost everywhere else.

High above the town on a seemingly inaccessible precipice the domed Greek church and Monastery of *Mehr Thekla* patterned the sharp dip of the sky. To climb to it was not easy. Two narrow rocky chasms lead up to right and left of the town, down which cascade the streams that feed

the valley. Up one of these we hopped from stone to stone. Only the greatest enthusiasm aided by invigorating mountain air could have enabled me to get to the top. There on the cliff's edge, on a rocky plateau which softened slightly into high stony pastures at the back, stood the church and its dependent buildings. In the courtyard, already warned by some forerunner of our approaching visit, a handsome middle-aged woman was fanning the flames between a couple of stones to prepare coffee for us. Gratefully I sat down on the chair she provided for me, while the others, inflamed by curiosity, rushed at once up the steps and entered the church. Although it looked like a Byzantine structure, perhaps going back in part to Justinian's time, it was not very interesting except to specialists in the history of architecture, and they soon came out for their coffee. Meantime I had expressed, through an interpreter, my gratitude for the refreshment and exchanged a few compliments with the woman, who in her Arab politeness said she regretted that we were not going to spend the night under her roof, but would be made very happy indeed if I would return and spend a whole day with her.

From the balcony of the hospitable priest's house we looked out across miles of rocks piled into grand fortress-like masses, to the plain that stretched endlessly to the vaporous mountains on the east.

Directly below us pigeons swarmed in and out of the rock ledges, and hurrying swallows darted to and fro, and we could see the gardens spreading themselves out from the village like a fan. When we started to return to our cars the way at first skirted the edge of the cliff from which we had the same view. I clumped along, following as best I could in the track of my husband, who divided his energies between trying to decipher the Greek inscriptions (some of them dating from the first century of our era) in the early Christian rock tombs that bordered the way, and waving his arms and shouting to us, "Come on! There never was such a glorious view!" We watched the sinking sun lengthen the violet shadows of our cliffs over the little oasis and then over the lower hills, till they covered the entire plain beyond, so that it was getting dusk when we crawled and slid down the other chasm, between high walls of rock that left only a few feet for the stream and ourselves to get through.

THE HAURAN AND SOUEIDA

Another excursion was to the mysterious Hauran and the Jebel-Druse, of whose dreamy outlines clad in all the tender hues of distance we had been conscious almost ever since we started for Damascus. The very name somehow, perhaps because I knew it was the ancient "Land of Bashan," sug-

gested strange beauty and adventure. It used to be very difficult to travel in that region. Even as recently as Gertrude Bell's trip described in *The Desert and the Sown* (1907) the only method of travelling was on horseback and the only accommodation tents of one's own or the hospitality of the natives. Nor was it quite safe.

Even now, the track that coils itself over the plain is a very uncertain one, although after Ezra, about eight miles from Soueida, the capital of the district, a splendid military road was laid down when the recent insurrection of the Druses against the French was suppressed. But before Ezra, after leaving "the street which is called straight" which leads to Jerusalem and Mecca, the road was not metalled, and it wandered for fifty miles or so at the caprice of the streams which overflowed and destroyed it here, buried it with a swamp there or dug a channel too deep for a motor to cross. Hence we had a good deal of wandering and arrived at Soueida only towards sunset, the silhouette of the town showing black and impressive against the flushed sky. It was a picturesque moment, when great flocks of sheep and goats were being brought in from the fields to be watered at the big pool that lies at the edge of the village before they reached their night's shelter inside the town. Beyond the pool to the west stretched the vast grassy

and grain-sown plain we had crossed, Syria's main cereal region. The Anti-Lebanon range closed the horizon, with Hermon's rose-tinted snows rising high into the oncreeping shadows of the evening sky. We wandered through the town in the dusk and saw the remains of a basilica from the fifth century which was in good preservation up to the recent bombardment. Still fairly intact in the ruined basilica are the floor mosaics where we noticed what we thought to be the earliest tomb portrait in mosaic so far discovered; since then, however, we have seen some of even earlier date in the early Christian cemetery at Tarragona, now under excavation. Another pool among the low stone houses gave us an idea of what Jerusalem must have looked like under the kings.

We and our friend, the Italian Consul, with his sister and cousin, were the first foreign visitors at the newly opened hotel (Soueida is a military station), and we made merry over the good cooking and the famous wine grown on the volcanic slopes of the Jebel-Druse.

KANAVAT

The next morning a stout little Ford car took us to the ruins of Kanavat, a five-mile wheeled scramble over rocks. Kanavat, like Amman, was one of the Roman confederation of the Decapolis, the ten cities placed to protect the main routes of

commerce across the Jordan to the desert.* All these towns, except Damascus, date from the first century and they were most flourishing under the Antonines (A.D. 134-180), who made roads and established enough peace in the land to allow the towns of the Decapolis to express their prosperity in great architecture. This I have already described in speaking of Jerash, and in Kanavat we found similar remains—colonnaded streets, forum, theatre, temples, tombs, bridges, aqueducts and all the noble appurtenances of Greek or Roman high civilization. Owing to its mountain situation and the wealth of water, it had been a summer resort for Romans and rich Syrians, and hence was richly laid out with regard to the luxuries considered necessary at the time. A tourist we met complained that antique ruins were too much alike, too monotonous, to be really exciting, but I felt that one might as well say the same of Beethoven's symphonies.

And here at Kanavat, within the grand Greco-Roman scheme, there were differences that we found quite exciting enough to fill a whole morning and cause a lively regret at not having a week

* These were, with Damascus as the head, Scythopolis (now called by its ancient name of Beshamar or Beisan) on the west of the Jordan overlooking the Lake of Galilee, and then Pella, Gadara, Hippos commanding the north of the great table-land beyond the Jordan; then farther east came Amman and Jerash and a couple of cities whose sites have not been ascertained, and then Kanavat, the Hauran outpost. Other towns joined the Confederation later.

to spare for the ruins. The stone used was the unyielding and gloomy black basalt of the region, and it aroused our utmost admiration to see how they had carved it into shapes of beauty and grace, using its very hardness to give mass and force to the acanthus capitals, the friezes and the lintel decoration, that softer stones cannot offer. The first building we came on was unusual, a small oval peripteral temple standing on a moulded stone platform about ten feet high. Most of the delicately swung columns remain, with their capitals and a portion of the imposts. The temple stands alone, considerably outside the town in an olive and fruit orchard facing Mount Hermon's snowy mass, behind which its priests could see every evening the fiery disappearance of the sun-god to whom their temple was dedicated—the only god who never disappointed his worshippers.

The town itself, like Amman and Jerash, was built on two hillsides divided by a stream. The side upon which most of the buildings stood was well watered by a mountain spring which, escaping from the ruined Roman aqueduct, rippled down the stony street, forming pools here and there where naked little children were paddling and splashing. Much of the ancient paving remains, but in so ruinous a state that our obliging chauffeur, who, seeing I was tired, had suggested taking me up to the top in the car, had first to clear the

detached paving stones out of the way, a band of Arabs looking on in surprise that anyone should take the trouble to improve a road! At the top of the town we found a big temple all in black basalt, but weathered and stained with lichen, and, built across it inside, an early Christian basilica. The doorways were exquisitely carved with the grape-vine and wine-cup, emblems perhaps at first of the Syrian version of Dionysos (Dusares or Dushara), but easily transferred to the Christian cult, where the Living Vine symbolized Christ, and the Cup, His Blood. In fact, we noticed the Cross cut into a cluster of grapes on one doorway.

Following one of the streams along a street lined with antique basalt houses, we reached the point where it plunged into the valley, and, looking over, saw the lovely remains of the Nymphaeum built over a spring, and of the nine-tiered theatre with its rock-hewn seats, both set in the greenest of little valleys. Two great towers on the opposite height guarded the ravine. The town has been described, the buildings measured, the inscriptions copied, and all is duly set down in the Reverend A. C. Porter's *Five Years in Damascus*. He was far more venturesome than we, travelling lightly with a horse and a blanket, and he explored not only Kanavat but many of the nearby towns that fringe the great Hauran plain; but we, tied to our motors, with no five years to spend in Syria, had to be con-

tent with Soueida and Kanavat as samples, or, as we tried fondly to think, as foretastes of what the future might give us time to explore more fully. Travelling is like that: the beauty and interest of what one sees is enhanced by the secret vow one makes, half believing it will hold—"I will come back." When we go back to Damascus we shall visit Bosra ("Little Damascus," as it was called) Shubba, Salkhat, Ses, and all the other "Giant Cities of Bashan." Perhaps we shall even see one of the Bulls of Bashan! One never knows. These cities are not Greek but Greek and Semitic, still cast, however, as Sir G. A. Smith says, "in the great moulds of the Empire. In the Decapolis Rome sheltered Greeks; in those other cities she disciplined half-Greek Syrians and wild Arabs."

THE HAURAN

This element of the exotic gives the region its peculiar attraction, and now that most of these black towns are utterly deserted, although their houses with basalt roofs and doors are still intact, there is about them a feeling of magic, as if some sorcerer a thousand years ago had caused the inhabitants to vanish, leaving their habitations as snails leave their shells. No one could better convey the effect they make than the author I am being continually tempted to enhance my pages by quoting. Sir G. A. Smith says:

One remembers the weirdness of wandering as a child through the Black Cities of the Arabian Nights. Under the strong sun, the basalt takes on a sullen sheen like polished ebony; the low and level architecture is unrelieved even by threads of mortar, for the blocks were cut so fine, and lie so heavy on each other, that no cement was needed for the building; there is besides, an utter absence of trees, bush, ivy and all green. This weirdness is naturally greatest where cities, emptied of their inhabitants more than a thousand years ago, still stand tenantless. An awful silence fills the sable ruins; there is never a face, nor a flower, nor the flutter of a robe in all the bare black streets. But the fascination is shared even by the towns into which this generation has crept back, and patched their ruins with bricks of last year's mud. In these I have seen yellow sheaves piled high against the black walls, and the dust of the threshing-floors rising thick in the sunbeams, but the sunshine showed so pallid and ineffectual over the sullen stone, that what I looked on seemed to be not the flesh and blood and labour of today, but the phantasm of some ancient summer afternoon flung magically back upon its desolate and irresponsive stage.

Who would not promise himself to return to such scenes?

But, above all, in that radiant, timeless future, we shall explore the mysterious Lejah (the Argob of the Bible, the Trachonitis of the Greeks) that looks so strange and fascinating on most maps, with a slender, spider-like web of lines indicating cracks and fissures in a lava-bed that long ago con-

gealed into a huge wrinkled platform, three hundred and fifty square miles in extent, the immemorial haunt of robbers and the refuge to which Absalom fled after the murder of his brother. We skirted its edge but did not feel that we really saw it, and it waked the child in us, filling us with longing to climb and explore among its maze of rocks and caverns.

But real time is inexorable, whatever tricks one's fancy plays with it, and we began to retrace our steps through the waving green fields of Bashan, the Land of Og, "The Hollow," Iturea, Nabatea, Trachonitis, Jeden—all these names have been loosely attached to this region. The Hauran proper is the high plain stretching south from Mount Hermon between the Jaulanite mountains on the east, with the Lejah and the Jebel Druse on the west. It is practically treeless (hence the stone roofs and doors), but the wind, which has an unimpeded sweep of fifty miles north and south keeps it fresh and comparatively cool. Under Trajan it was formed into the Province of Arabia, and from being the ragged edge of a continually menaced civilization it became one of the great organized Roman departments. Roads, reservoirs, temples, baths, sprang into being, villages became cities, Greek was talked, Greek gods—with some admixture of local divinities—were worshipped in the temples. The Greek customs and religion

gave place to the civilization of Byzance and the temples sheltered the smaller basilicas of the Christians. "The assembly of demons," an old inscription runs, "has become the house of the Lord." In this region and at this time, as De Vogüé[1] has pointed out, the experiment was first made of putting the cupola on a square by means of spherical pendentives—an innovation that was the parent of so much!

In 634 the Great Misfortune happened. Mahometan hosts overran the Hauran and blasted its vitality. Buildings were mutilated, destroyed, abused, "the great towns became shells in which little clans huddled for shelter." Finally, unable to protect their fields and flocks against the Bedouins who periodically poured in from the desert to reap what they had not sown, the inhabitants left their dwellings, and the plain reverted to the semi-desert which is the highest expression of Bedouin culture.

Yet the decay was a slow one. As late as the thirteenth century the vineyards of Salkand and the gardens of Burbala were still famous in Syria. Mediaeval Arab writers such as Abulfeda in the fourteenth century celebrate the doomed fertility of the land. But when Dr. Porter visited it, soon after 1850, he was moved to write:

Nowhere on the earth [is seen] such a melancholy example of the fatal effects of tyranny, rapacity and

misrule, as that here exhibited. Fields, vineyards, pastures, villages, cities are alike deserted and the few inhabitants who remain behind the barrier of rocks and mountains drag out a miserable existence oppressed by the robbers of the desert on the one hand and the still more formidable robbers of the Government on the other. . . . The sordid Pasha who bought the property would try to wring out of the poor peasant enough to repay with interest his outlay, and then he cared nothing, and the soil reverted to desert. . . . The Druses form the only exception to this, their courage, their union, and their position concentrated in the strongholds of the mountains, enable them to brave, when occasion demands it, the Turks and the Bedouins.[2]

IMPROVEMENT OF CONDITIONS

This was written not long ago. By now, little by little, relieved of Turkish oppression and misrule and secure from invasion by the Bedouins, reduced in none too humane a fashion to accepting the French rule, the same Druses have gone a long way towards establishing the agriculture of the region, although not yet has the prosperity of ancient times been attained. We were struck, when we were at Soueida, with the proud bearing of this handsome race, among whom blue eyes and fair hair is by no means uncommon. The women are partially veiled but the faces of the little girls gave promise of later beauty. We saw several young men with long curls escaping from the shawls over

their heads and framing their cheeks, who were singularly good-looking, some of them in a very feminine way.[3]

DRUSE RELIGION

As we were driving home, my curiosity about strange beliefs led me to question our Maronite dragoman about the mysterious religion of the Druses. From him I learnt no good of the hereditary enemies of his race, nor of their beliefs and practices. Since then I have tried to find out something about it but the information is confused and scanty. It is a secret religion, and appears to carry various survivals of primitive cults on the stream of its Moslem heresy. For the Druses exalt El Hakim,[4] the fifth Fatimide Khalif of Egypt, who began to reign in 996, to a position even higher than that of Mahomet himself, taking their name from the Persian fanatic, Durzi (Darasi), who first recognized the divinity of Hakim, and who is supposed to have inspired much of his doctrine. El Hakim is believed to have been the last incarnation of Divinity, and soon after his final appeal to mankind, the door was closed and no new converts are allowed, the children born to Druse parents being reincarnations of dead Druses, and hence already within the fold. They expect Hakim to reappear—that old cry of despair invariably uttered by disciples whom death has reft

of their Messiah—and to retake Mecca and Jerusalem and conquer the world. He will appear, they believe, mounted on a white ass, and will stand on the top of the temple *El Ka'ba* carrying a drawn sword of gold.

With a loud voice he will recount the number of his manifestations in human form. . . . By his command thunders and tornadoes from heaven will descend and abolish the *Ka'ba* and raze its very foundations. The five Ministers will then sit in judgment on thrones of gold, studded with the most costly gems, under canopies of richest silk bespangled with rubies and pearls. The believers will be graciously received, their sins will be overlooked, and rich presents of raiment, weapons and horses will be given them. . . . At the same time the believers under the four inferior Ministers will travel all over the world killing infidels, destroying their governments, plundering their treasures and riches. This is the resurrection.[5]

There exists in the Druse religion a sort of Trinity, with Hakim's vizier, Hanza (Hamza) (author of most of their sacred writings), embodying the Universal Spirit, floating upon the two wings of the Soul and the Word. They have worked in a bit of Neo-Platonism, considering the material world as a "mirror of the Divine Intelligence." They have taken up some of the doctrines of the Further East, believing in the transmigration of the soul (but only into other human beings, bad men returning as Jews, Chris-

tians and Turks, not animals as their neighbours, the Ansariyeh, believe) and its final absorption into God, and have accepted from Persia the idea of the conflict between the two warring spirits of Good and Evil. Like so many sects of all kinds they find a special sacredness in the number seven. They have seven commandments, and Hakim, they say, let his beard grow for seven years, and for seven years rode on asses—these symbolizing the former exponents of Mahometanism.

This is, alas! not the place to go very deeply into this semi-interesting matter, but I cannot forbear mentioning the Druse belief that their Messiah, Hakim, was not murdered by his discontented subjects, as history has it, but was translated to China, where the souls of the Druses are supposed eventually to follow him. Chinamen are believed by the Druses to be secretly or latently Druses themselves, and on the day of Triumph two and a half millions of "Chinese Unitarians" will come up from the East and conquer the Mahometans, led by the four Evangelists under the "True Christ," not the one of the New Testament, for the man who was crucified was really Judas, who took on the semblance of Jesus, while the real one (Hanza), who during Christ's life appeared as Lazarus, remaining in hiding till he reappeared to the Magdalen and the Apostles after the death of Judas-Jesus on the Cross. They are inclined, too, to think that

the English, especially the Unitarians, are really Druses—indeed, anyone might be, for a Druse is allowed to practise all the current forms of religion, provided he keeps hold in his secret mind of his own peculiar doctrines. They accept as divinely inspired teachers Noah, Absalom, Moses, Jesus, Said and two Mahomets, though they believe their teachings as generally understood are false and inspired by Anti-Christ, and only true in the Druse secret interpretation of them. The editor of *A Journey from Aleppo to Damascus* says of them:

The religion of the Druses is a monstrous Composition of Maxims and moral Duties, which they retain of Christianity, whereof anciently they made Profession; and of Mohammedan Customs and Ceremonies, which they have adopted, either by means of continual Intercourse with the Turks, or rather through Policy, in order to procure their good Will and Protection. They keep the Book which their Legislator left them, very religiously. It contains three sections, in form of Letters, which comprize all the Mysteries of their Religion. The Women are reckoned to be better instructed in their Religion than the Men, which makes them to be much respected; they have the Care of teaching their own Sex, and explaining the Books of their two Legislators to them. They recommend the keeping of them secret above all things; and these Women are so true to their Trust, that all we have been able to discover of these Books, till the present, is that they contain Fables and extravagant Histories.

And he ends his account piously by saying: "The violent attachment which they have for their Religion, and their obstinate refusing to be taught, gives us just cause to fear that this Nation will forever close their Eyes against the Light of the Gospel, which shines over their heads."

Laurence Oliphant, always interested in esoteric doctrines, gives a fairly full account of the Druse beliefs, and I refrain with difficulty from quoting more of it. The name, I confess, has always haunted me, perhaps from their struggles against the Turks, which aroused the sympathy of every little Liberal child. Then, vague ideas of Pantheism and Rosicrucianism adhere to them; suspicions of phallic, gynocratic and calf worship linger round their hilltop shrines where they still hang rugs and other decorations on circles of black stones. They are somehow connected with Free Masonry, having secret signs and passwords by which they recognize each other no matter where they meet; they are known to be secretive, cruel and treacherous to all but their own community; they are abstemious even to the exclusion of tobacco along with wine; they are monogamists, and although very jealous of their beautiful women, they give them a higher place intellectually than is usual in the East. All these associations, true and false, that cling to the name "Druse" have always had for me, and probably for others as well

(one is never unique or original), a peculiar interest, almost fascination.

I am therefore sorry to say that I end my researches into their peculiar doctrines with a feeling that may perhaps be best expressed in the terms of a "Proverb" that was current among the members of the "Idiot Club" I belonged to in London forty years ago—"A Lamp has no Real Inside," *"Eine Lampe hat kein eigentliches Eingeweide."* Every religion, it is true, shines with light borrowed from the past, but I know no parallel to the Druse farrago of the nonsense of all the creeds and beliefs of mankind.[6]

I take leave of them recalling that they have produced only one eminent man in the millennium of their existence as a separate sect. This was the famous Emir Fakr-ed-Din, who ruled the Lebanon in the early seventeenth century. He was allied with Venice against the Turks, the natural enemies of both. He went to the court of the Medicis in Florence to ask for assistance and remained for nine years in Italy, returning to incur much hatred in the Lebanon by putting up some buildings in the European style. He extended his sway to Beirut and Sidon on the one hand, and to the Lake of Tiberias and Mount Carmel on the other. He was finally captured by the Turks and strangled in Constantinople. One Druse woman, too, became famous, a Princess of the house of

Ruslan, who in the eighteenth century governed part of the Lebanon. She was accustomed to hear and judge cases sitting behind a curtain (for her face is the last thing any Mahometan woman may permit a man to see), and her judgments were found to be wise and just.

EZRA

On our way back to Damascus we stopped at the town of Ezra, the ancient Zoroa, situated on the edge of the Lejah, and saw the Church of St. George, built in 515, and continuously used for the Greek ritual to the present day. De Vögué calls it "certainly the most interesting of all the Christian edifices of this region." The exterior is square but the interior is octagonal, following the type set at Antioch in the time of Constantine, and it is interesting for the primitive way in which the ambulatory is roofed with huge slabs of basalt. Even more interesting to us, for we are not architects, was a great dolman-like stone held in place over the entrance by clasps, but capable of being dropped to crush enemies who sought to invade the church. We wandered through the half deserted town, noting many old houses with not only roofs but doors of basalt, the substitute for wood in that treeless region. We also noticed here and there mouldings as delicate as the best Renaissance work.

We saw to right and left of our road a number of other towns with churches and mosques and fortresses that looked at least as interesting as Ezra, but there was no time to stop and explore them. It was quite dark when we reached Damascus.

CHAPTER IX

PALMYRA TO ALEPPO

AND have I really been in Palmyra? I ask myself, sitting comfortably surrounded by books, endeavouring to hold fast the memories of our wonderful journey. Was it really old me, with my rheumatism, my luxurious habits of comfort, my devotion to the day's ordered routine, who travelled across the Syrian desert in the blast of the sun, who lingered for days among the temples and colonnades, the fleshless ghosts of Zenobia's stately town; who saw the thousands of camels brought to water by their wild Bedouin herdsmen? I remember it all, so I suppose I must be the same person who had this great adventure, though everything around me, save this sheet of writing paper, and everything in me, save a vital spark of memory, contradicts it.

Yet we did indeed, on May 3, 1929, leave Damascus and turn our faces to the desert and Palmyra. Not for us—fortunately, for the fatigue would have been prohibitive—the slow, four or five days' journey on horseback, parched with thirst and heat by day, and tortured by vermin in the khans or under the black tents of Arab sheiks

at night (but how fascinating all the same!), nor the leisurely but infinitely picturesque caravan trip on the backs of the camels. The one day which we passed in comfortable motors to arrive at Palmyra was enough of an adventure for us, though indeed we thought with envy of those earlier intrepid travellers who have told the far more exciting tales of their journeys thither.[1]

THE ROAD TO PALMYRA

We left Damascus reluctantly, with the baffled impression of not having become familiar with it, of not understanding its topography. Yet we were glad to get away from the sordid hotel and the noisy street our windows opened on, and to feel ourselves once more on the way to the Unknown. The road led us again through the groves and fields we had passed on our way to Maloula, as far as the big khan, and then it bent to the east. By this time the trees had ceased, the streams having meandered off around the base of the low hills we now began to cross. We saw the streams later, losing themselves in shallow lakes, bordered with salt, which looked like pure marble and which we at first took to be the effect of mirage. Our friend Baedeker had warned us in his epigrammatic style that there was little to see after we had passed the few villages, each set in its green oasis, which lie along the first part of the road—"the scenery is

very dreary," he comments. But we found it endlessly beautiful, the rust-coloured desert spread out under the azure sky—*"un ciel d'immortelle jeunesse"*—bordered with distant mountains whose outline changed with each moment of our advance, revealing at every step gorges and ravines and rocky promontories. Here and there camels stalking about, bending their curved necks and sticking out their dirty tongues to snatch a bit of dry brush from the barren land, or stepping slowly along in a chain with their air of contemptuous indifference, broke the movelessness of the desert, which otherwise was still and silent save for the occasional rustle of a partridge stirring in the low clumps of growing shrubs and the tufts of wild liquorice, or a large lizard, the silver downpour of a lark's song, or a great Griffin vulture floating overhead on dark wings.

Yet beautiful as it was, it was hot and glaring, so that it was a pleasurable relief when at lunch-time we reached the village and oasis of Karyatein, and were ushered into a cool, clean, airy upper room in the house of the Jacobite priest,[2] a friend of our dragoman. There we ate one of the excellent lunches which never failed us, and then "made *Kief*" for a little while on the divans ranged along the room, fanned by cool breezes produced by the magic of the oasis, while the desert all around was

trembling and shimmering with the radiant heat, like ripples in a lake.

From the time when we started again on our journey, all the five hours on to Palmyra, the landscape and colours grew more and more beautiful, passing through lilac, mauve and brilliant violet to royal purple deepening to indigo and black, as the hills drew in closer and threw longer shadows upon the desert. We passed on the way an old golden-coloured castle, *Kasr-el-Heir,* with much of its walls and many of its windows still standing, though it was long ago deserted by all human life and by the water that gave it being. At a little distance from the tower lay the lintel of one of the portals half buried in the débris. Its fine sculptured decoration in the style called "Palmyrene" was a foretaste of enjoyments to come. Presently we discerned ahead of us hills that seemed almost to bar our path, with only a small dip between them guarded by a couple of towers. Above on a sharp line to the left was a fortress visible for many miles around, an enchantment it seemed, placed by the Djinns of the Arabian Nights on an inaccessible ridge, following its contours as a serpent might have coiled itself along the top of a jagged rock. In the evening light it looked opaline and almost transparent, as if the Djinns, according to their agreeable habit, had built it of precious stones.

We went up between the towers which rose out of the rock, grey and dead, silent, deserted, worn with the decay of time, and Palmyra was before us lying where it fell, its antique beauty unspoiled by any modern touch. We let the cars and luggage go on to the little inn while we sat on the stones and looked and looked. We felt that we had never seen anything so romantic, so *stimmungsvoll*. With her kind permission I quote again from Lady Sybil Lubbock's book, feeling that she has described her and our impression far more poetically than I could do:

There it lay, all that was left of the great city of Palmyra, and in a mass of ruined temples and arches and colonnades, not heaped close together clumsily as in so many ruined towns, but set out delicately over the pale sand and flushed now in the sunset glow to every shade of faint or glowing rose. Only the mediaeval Turkish [really Arab] castle, far above and away on its height, shone golden still in the starlight. Then slowly the light faded and the shadows from the hills flowed like dark water on the plain, swallowing up column after column, and all that we could see were the few lights of the modern village and then, as far as the eye could reach, the pale and illimitable sands.

PALMYRA AND ZENOBIA

Reaching the hotel at the fall of darkness we found to our surprise a well-ordered and well-furnished little inn, instead of the small native

khan or the "Sheik's House" described by former travellers. This hotel is run by a young French couple of aristocratic birth who were full of enthusiasm, good will and good ideas. Unfortunately, the Government has not allowed them to buy the hotel nor even to lease it, and hence all their plans for improvements are at a standstill, as they do not want to begin expensive works, even such elementary ones as bringing water into the house, making proper drainage, putting up fly-screens and blinds etc., while their tenure is so uncertain. The comfort, therefore, of the pleasant-looking place was more apparent than real, and indeed we suffered much from light and flies and bad odours. But our sympathy went out to our hosts in this gallant undertaking. If ever there were a place where a good and comfortable hotel would be welcome to the traveller, it is here. The interest and beauty of the ruins would tempt almost anyone to stay for several days, and others, like ourselves, would gladly remain there for two or three weeks, if conditions were possible. As it was, we had to make the best of our four days, and they were indeed four of the most interesting of our lives.

The morning after arriving we began, sitting among the gorgeous remains, to make ourselves familiar with the main points of Palmyrene history.

But Palmyra means Zenobia and nothing else to most people. And indeed, interesting in its way as is the history of the commerce of this town, enisled, as it were, in the desert between Mesopotamia in the east and Damascus and the coast on the west, and drawing its importance solely from its situation as a trade-centre, the only personality that arose to lend to the place a vivid human interest was Zenobia. The story of the five years in which she held sway, her dreams and ambitions, her passionate endeavours, her tragic defeat "fall like a splash of blood or fire upon the grey years of desert history." This queen was accustomed to boast of being descended from the Ptolemies, reckoning Cleopatra among her forebears. She combined at her capital the sumptuous burial practices of the land of her origin, the luxury of her eastern neighbours, the Persians, and the arts and letters of the Greeks. The funeral monuments of Palmyra, those great towers or underground caverns, filled with rows of shelves of embalmed bodies and with their sculptured and painted effigies, are paralleled only in Egypt. Her court, her gorgeous apparel, her jewels were famous for a magnificence that rivalled the court of the King of Kings.

The architecture and disposition of the town are Greek, with local touches, of course, and Greek inscriptions began under Zenobia's influence to re-

place the native Aramaic ones. We know also that the Queen selected Longinus, the philosopher of Emesa (Homs), as her First Minister, and cultivated a friendship with the Patriarch Paul of Samothrace, the pupil of Origen. She showed so much interest in the religion of the numerous Jews settled in Palmyra that she was referred to as a Jewess by some later writers. In addition to the vernacular, the Greek and Aramaic of her town, she could read Latin and knew the native Egyptian, and she wrote a short work on Oriental history. She had her sons well trained in Latin (as became members of an imperial family), though she was not sufficiently fluent in its use to speak it herself.

Zenobia received her kingdom from the hands of her husband Odenatus, an Arab chief whose influence preponderated in the councils of the merchant republic of Palmyra. Odenatus, after holding a judicial balance of power between the Romans and the Sassanide Persians, finally came over to the Roman side, defeated Sapor in 267, and pushed him back to Ctesiphon on the Euphrates. He defended the interests of the Emperor against the Goths in Asia Minor, and for this Gallien rewarded him by making him commander-in-chief of the Oriental forces of the Roman army, associating him with himself as Augustus in the Empire. His wife, who had accompanied him

on all his expeditions, supported him with enthusiasm when he began to carve out a kingdom for himself in the provinces which Rome had confided to him, but he and his son Herod were both assassinated by his nephew, A.D. 266-7, who was soon afterwards himself killed by his soldiers. Thus the ambitious Zenobia was left to carry out his schemes. Her vivid figure still flashes across the centuries, leading her Arab armies to conquest, exhorting them from horseback, bare-armed with a helmet on her dark flowing hair, inciting them to warlike enthusiasm by her flashing black eyes, her eloquence, her beauty, her daring. So long dead, she still exercises her spell. Chaucer's Monk tells of

> Cenobia, of Palimerie quene
> As writen Persians of hir noblesse,
> So worthy was in armes, and so kene,
> That no wight passed her in hardinesse,
> Ne in linage, ne in other gentilesse.

Active and able, now cruel, now clement, Zenobia pushed her conquests until Mesopotamia, Syria and a large part of Egypt recognized her authority. Gibbon says of her, "Instead of the little passions which so frequently perplex a female reign, the steady administration of Zenobia was guided by the most judicious maxims of policy. If it was expedient to pardon, she could calm her

resentment; if it was necessary to punish, she could impose silence on the voice of pity."

But her ambition, her fatal dream of Empire, was her ruin. As soon as the anarchy which broke out under the Illyrian Emperors was quelled, Aurelian, the greatest of them all, turned his attention to regaining the East for Rome. The mere fact of his presence in Syria caused many of Zenobia's partisans to desert her, and when her army met the Roman army near Antioch, it suffered a crushing defeat.[3] Aurelian pursued her to Emesa, inflicting still another defeat upon her, and then to Palmyra itself, and took her captive as she was getting into a boat on the Euphrates to cross over and seek help from the Persian King. He recognized the local god, Yaribol, as Apollo, and attributed his victory to him.

Then comes the darkest act of this tragedy. "She ignominiously purchased life by the sacrifice of her fame and her friends" (Gibbon). Aurelian killed her Minister Longinus and other advisers upon whom she threw the responsibility of her actions, and appropriated the treasure he found in her coffers, but he spared the lovely town, taking Zenobia to grace his Roman Triumphal Procession. Cleopatra facing ruin with the poison of the asp is a more noble figure than Zenobia led in chains of gold to the Capitol as a spectacle for the Roman crowd. After Aurelian had left, a revolt

broke out at Palmyra, which brought the Roman legions back to pillage and destroy. They carried away the treasures of the Temple of Baal to decorate the one Aurelian built to the Sun in Rome. The town was rebuilt later on by Justinian who surrounded it with the walls that can still be followed in a snaky line of broken stones.

But with the eclipse of the Queen, Palmyra ceased to count as an important centre. Gone was the flourishing town described by Pliny, "remarkable for its situation and its red soil and agreeable streams." It was then (as now) "surrounded," he wrote, "on all sides by a sandy desert which wholly separated it from the rest of the world" and it "preserved its independence between the two great Empires of Rome and Persia, whose principal care when they were fighting each other was to engage Palmyra on their side." But now it was no longer needed even as a frontier against the Persians, for the Arab sway extended over Mesopotamia. Eastern trade had begun to seek the coast by the less mountainous route of Aleppo, Homs and Tripoli, and even before the Arab conquest the city had vanished from history. It was mentioned only by a few writers such as Benjamin of Tudela who in the thirteenth century found a colony of Jews there, and Abulfeda who in 1321 speaks of the ruins. It was not till 1678 that some merchants from Aleppo set out to "discover" it,

and not till 1691 that they reached it, for their first expedition had been broken up by brigands. They left a few descriptions of what remained of the ruined town. In 1751 Woods and Dawkins got there and stayed several days making plans and drawings. I have before me the 1819 French edition of their work (Firmin Didot), and it is still valuable for its careful historical *précis* and the engravings of the monuments, some of which have since been destroyed. If the Palmyra ruins still remain the most complete ruins of antiquity that exist it is partly because the inhabitants were too few and too lazy to pull them down, preferring to stick their wasps' nest of mud in and around the great temple to constructing real buildings of their own; partly because Palmyra stood in such an isolated position; and partly because the climate was dry, so that no lichen or mosses or ivy collected in the stones, and because the earthquakes were comparatively few. The town sank to being only the dwelling-place of a handful of Bedouins, the half-yearly watering-place of the desert camels and the resort of occasional tourists. But now the French, in their admirable endeavour to stop the incessant fighting among the wandering Bedouin tribes, have made it an aviation centre, whence small flocks of machines go out at the first hint of trouble to put the fear of the Lord into the hearts of the nomads.

But I have wandered far from Zenobia, and I suppose I must round off her story, though its end is an anti-climax to its brilliant commencement, when young, experienced, beautiful, accomplished and learned, strong, chaste in morals, prudent and circumspect in deliberation but firm in execution, generous without profusion, magnificent like the semi-oriental she was, intrepid on the field of battle, she extended her sway from Egypt to the Bosphorus. After gracing Aurelian's triumphal procession, she settled down quietly enough as a *bonne bourgeoise* in the possession of a property the Emperor gave her on the road to Tivoli, contracted a second marriage and bore children, and formed a circle of friends and admirers of whom the Emperor was one.

OTHER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Zenobia is the great figure of Palmyra, her brief reign marking the climax of the town's splendours. Before her not much was heard of it. Except an Assyrian text of the twelfth century B.C., the two references in the Old Testament (I Kings 10: 18 and II Chronicles 8: 4) stating that King Solomon "built Tadmor in the wilderness" (possibly a later "attribution" to swell the glory of the King's already famous name), there are few mentions of it until the era of the Seleucids when it was recognized as the centre of commerce between the Eu-

phrates and the Mediterranean. We know that the oases on the route were kept up by underground channels and that the skilfully conducted, rather sulphurous stream gushing from a rock to the south of Palmyra (which the present-day Arabs allow to run off in the sand), added to the water brought by an immensely long conduit from the plain between the two Lebanon ranges, made of Palmyra a fair town of gardens and orchards whose riches were so great that they tempted Marcus Antonius to send a troop to attempt its pillage.

WATERING OF CAMELS

Before we had time to work out, with the help of books and maps, the plan of the streets and buildings, a strange adventure befell us. We went out our first afternoon to visit the tower-tombs that stand on the rise at the entrance to the town, when suddenly we perceived strings of camels lined out on the desert as far as we could see, advancing towards us. Presently they were almost upon us, hundreds of them with their young, straggling along under the direction of their Bedouin herdsmen who were half naked or clad in wonderful rags, with long hair streaming down from the shawls wrapped about their heads. Sometimes a camel would stray from the group he belonged to and stand on the edge of the cliff along which the road ran, peering this way and that with his snake-

like neck and his head that in outline suggested some great prehistoric lizard or tortoise.* Then a hoarse cry from his master, to us indistinguishable in the tumult of cries, would recall him to his group.

It appears that Palmyra, being the only really well-watered oasis in this great stretch of desert, is used as one of the chief drinking-places for the roaming herds, and that they come twice a year, going to and returning from their winter haunts, to drink from the Palmyrene stream. Leaving the tombs to another time, for we were fascinated by the spectacle, we went to see them watered, watching them from a rocky shelf above the stream. The scene was unforgettable—the cries of the wild herdsmen, the groans of the camels, which were like the roar of waves breaking on a stony beach, the shrill notes of pipes played by some of the men, made a tumult of sound that could be heard for miles. All seemed confusion at first, but gradually we made out that the camels were going in companies to the stream, each company following its leading camel, and that no shout or command

* The Arab legend of the origin of the camel runs as follows: The horse complained to Allah that he was not made for the desert, and life in it was unendurable to him. His feet sank in the sand, his back could bear only a small burden, he could not carry a supply of water in his body, and he could not eat thorns. So Allah changed the horse in these several respects and the camel was the result. But when the horses saw the answer to their petition they were so terrified that to this day they have never recovered from their terror.

could induce them to leave the stream till they had drunk their fill. They bent long snaky necks to the water and then stretched them up to swallow, repeating the movement till their thirst was satisfied. They formed a line of beasts raising and lowering their heads in unison, as it were in some fantastic ballet-scene. We lingered till long after sunset, when the hills (whence from a great subterranean lake the stream dashes out) had turned a rusty black against the faintly tinted violet sky. All night the monstrous procession of camels came and went, we could hear their roar from the terrace of our hotel. Their number was vaguely estimated from four to eighty thousand. I have myself no means of computing how many camels could come in, drink and go away again in the course of hours, which was the length of time the process continued.

I was so fascinated by the whole thing, that when the flies began to buzz in my bedroom at four o'clock the next morning, I got up and went out on the terrace to watch the creatures coming and going, and to listen to the sounds they made. I perceived a band of heavily laden camels coming over the hills pushing through the crowd of slow-moving beasts at a swift run; and presently they were received at the watering-place, hidden from me by a ledge of rocks, with fierce yells from the men and piercing shrieks from the women, that

tore across the deep diapason of the encampment's noises like streaks of lightning in a thundery day. Afterwards I learnt that these swiftly running beasts had brought in thirty-six dead bodies of men, slain about eight miles away in one of the ever-recurrent desert tribe-wars. In a brief time the roar of a small flock of aeroplanes overpowered all the other noises, as the airmen from the French military station launched themselves out to put an end to the fray. I am inclined to think that the Bedouins hate the French occupation chiefly because it interferes with their glorious age-long pursuit of killing each other! They have a proverb which runs: "Paradise is under the shadow of swords."

MONUMENTS

The next day we spent wandering about among the rows of golden columns and the remains of the temples, trying to work out the plan of the antique town. Unlike those plucky explorers of a hundred years ago, Irby and Mangles,[4] our standard of beauty was not size, and we were not as disturbed as they were by the fact that "none of the columns exceeded in diameter four feet, and in height forty," nor that "those of the boasted avenue were little more than thirty feet high." They affronted dangers and discomforts that would certainly have turned us back, but when they suc-

ceeded in passing through the hostile bands of Arabs that threatened to block their progress and even to kill them, their comment ran: "Great was our disappointment when we found that there was not a single column, pediment, architrave, portal or frieze worthy of admiration, and we judged Palmyra to be hardly worthy of the time, expense, anxiety, and the fatiguing journey which we had undergone to visit it. We suspect that it was the difficulty of getting to Tadmor, and the fact that few travellers have been there, that has given rise to the great renown of the ruins." Even of the glorious Temple of the Sun, although they might well have been impressed by the fact that it is more than a mile to walk round it outside, they only say: "They [columns of the Temple] are fluted, and when decorated with their brazen Ionic capitals [long since stolen and probably melted down], were doubtless very handsome." From the roof, when we climbed up there at tea-time, we gazed down into the huge unroofed interiors and I must say greatly admired the richly sculptured frieze which they found so "badly wrought." We looked abroad and saw the desert stretching out towards Mesopotamia on the east, and the bare, many-coloured hills that shut in the west. We passed through the mosque that has nested itself in the interior of the temple, and noticed some very fine twelfth- or thirteenth-century Arabic

stucco ornaments in the interior. In the court leading to the staircase, under a projecting roof there was an antique ceiling with hexagonal cupolas, decorated with painted busts of divinities, whose figures had a swing and fire that curiously recalled Melozzo da Forlì's frescoes of the Angels in the Sacristy of St. Peter's. We felt half awed to realize that we were actually in one of the great shrines of Baal—for whose imagination has not been thrilled by Milton's

> Peor and Baalim
> Forsake their temples dim?

Such poetry starts an aesthetic, emotional vibration in the soul which lends endless overtones to experiences when they come. And here, we not only saw with our eyes Baal's deserted temple of golden stone, rising from the desert, but in our fancy we saw the smoke of the vanished incense and heard the clash of the ancient music and the chants of the priests saluting the solar deity—the only god who never disappoints the expectations of his worshippers. Here in Palmyra he was called Baalsamin, "the Lord of Heaven," or Malakbel, the Mesopotamian name for the Sun-god. The moon was worshipped here too under the strange name of Aglibol or the Arab *Allat,* appearing to have interchanged attributes with the Phoenician Astarte, the Syriac Atargatis and the Greek

Athena. The Heavenly Twins, the morning and evening stars, were adored under the Arab names of *Arizun and Arsus.* But the great local god upon whom, after the sun, all the life and prosperity of the town depended, was Yaribol or *Yarchi-bol,* "the Moon in Ba'al," the oracular deity of their spring of water. There we stood looking down into the deserted shrine of these fabulous deities on the one side and on the other into the squalid Arab village that has filled the great walled enclosure and fastened itself to the north side of the temple, with its filthy courtyards, its narrow, dirty streets, and the flat roofs of the houses, the haunt of fowls and pigeons, of goats even, and rabbits. The stately and massive pillars of the ancient temple rise right through the roofs of these worthless mud-huts that cluster within the court. There is a French project for destroying this village to clear the court and wall of the temple, settling the inhabitants in another spot. But Baalsamin and Yaribol will never return!

We went back to the tombs before our visit was over. The apocryphal "Tomb of Zenobia" is below ground and contains frescoed portraits and medallions disposed and executed in a way that recalled eighteenth-century French decoration, itself of course only a reinterpretation of classic art. Another tomb contained imposing, but alas!

headless figures and delicately carved pilasters, and had a blue and white ceiling. Another, whose roof was gone, had a reclining figure dressed in Persian costume carried out to the minutest detail. But the most characteristic Palmyrene tombs are the great towers, a few of which are well preserved. They have elaborately carved doorways. One is surmounted by a balcony halfway up the face of the tower, on which rests a carven tomb, recalling the Renaissance sepulchral monuments on the inner walls of Italian churches. Within these towers you see, opposite the door, sculptured family groups and to right and left along the walls, separated by stucco pilasters, with tier upon tier of cells for the embalmed bodies of the family or clan that were interred there. In one of these towers of death it has been calculated that there is room for nearly five hundred bodies. At times there were traces of the blue or red colouring of the stucco pilasters and ceiling.

In the afternoon we managed, in spite of the heat, to struggle up to the fortress that overlooks Palmyra from a western hill, built from stones taken from the ruins of the ancient city. It is a longish climb, but in times of drought the inhabitants of Palmyra, dressed in their best clothes, make the ascent in order to pray for rain, after having sacrificed a lamb on the top. The fortress itself is endlessly picturesque, its foundations grip-

ping an inner rock separated by a deep moat from the outer edge of the mountain. There was no way of getting across the moat, but we walked round it to see it from every side, and then settled ourselves with our tea-basket to watch the coming of the sunset. From that height the great colonnade and the scattered columns and temples looked strangely thin and spidery, like white skeletons of themselves, but the vast Temple of the Sun held its own as mass, rivalling the hills. The reddish-brown mountains stretched to right and left in folds and crannies, in planes and bosses, changing with each moment that gave their shadows a deeper accent, and the desert stretched in front to the horizon, it, too, changing as the sun sank towards the edge of the hill behind us, and stained it with a deep indigo shadow.

At the time we felt it was the most wonderful thing we had ever seen, and we wondered if we could not buy the old castle and restore it and live there happy ever after, nourishing our souls with beauty.

The next morning, our last, we went to the old *Serai,* which has been turned into a museum. We rode there on camels, as it was very hot. The rest of the morning we spent sitting in the shade of the Triumphal Arch near the great monoliths of Egyptian purple granite, which contrast so gloriously with the white and orange limestone of the

rest of the colonnade. We read about the vanished glories of the town and wondered if the beautiful rows of columns could really have been as beautiful as now when they were adorned with the statues of prominent Palmyrene worthies for which the brackets could be seen halfway up the columns. Kelman calls these brackets "an outrage on the columns." The long colonnade extends for nearly 4,000 feet, and 750 columns are still standing, but the notabilities have long ago fallen from the brackets.

The museum contains all sorts of odds and ends, most of the statues being headless or otherwise mutilated. Palmyrene sculpture, it must be confessed, is not of the best quality.[5] The contrast between it and real Greek sculpture was brought out in the *Serai,* where a draped figure of pure Greek workmanship stands in the middle of the enclosure. Where the Greek line is alive and functional the Palmyrene is relaxed and sprawling; where the Greek modelling is firm and subtle the other is flabby and so schematic that the carvers eked it out with engravers' lines. The drapery is stringy, with meaningless bulges and bunches, as is ever the case when sculpture begins to forget the nude. In short, it has the defects common to provincial art everywhere. Here the Oriental touch of overelaboration in costume and jewels and

dressing of the hair, and a certain monotony of pose and style, especially in the female portraits, make it easy to say "Palmyra" in any museum—and as, until recently, every traveller carried away with him a specimen, museums and private collections all over Europe abound in them. In fact, very little is left on the spot. One fragment of frieze there contained a row of crouching camels, the fat roundness of their modelling recalling the sarcophagi at Ravenna, which certainly came from Byzantium or near it, the island of Marmora perhaps.

We were struck by the fact that, untouched as the ruins are, there is no trace in Palmyra of some of the invariable attributes (we had thought) of a classic town—no remains of public baths, no theatre, no hippodrome—nor could we hit upon any explanation of the lack.

MODERN WATER-CARRIERS

We left early in the afternoon and as we drove away I was struck with the unexpectedly hieratic effect of the tin cans which the women bore on their heads returning from the fountain to the village. Lady Sybil Lubbock speaks of "the women with striped pots of native fashion and classical designs upon their heads, stepping slowly like figures in an antique frieze, across the sand." They have, since her visit seven years ago, here as nearly

everywhere else, discarded these earthenware jars in favour of the lighter oil-cans which chauffeurs throw away. At a distance these stiff shapes of tin turn the line of women water-carriers into a frieze of ancient queens wearing high glittering crowns. But you must not see them too close!

This was our last glimpse of modern Palmyra as we drove off through the ruins.

HOMS

We were headed for Homs, and drove for hours across the desert whose monotony is only relieved by mirages of lakes and trees, and the curious effect of small stones which the sun or shadow on the level plain somehow enchant into the semblance of camels or still stranger antediluvian monsters. We passed the scene of the Bedouin fight of three days before—but nothing remained to show what had happened. The warring tribes, when France puts forth her hand, fold up their black goat-skin tents and flee into the recesses of the bare hills that fringe the desert.

We got to Homs, the ancient Emesa, where Zenobia suffered defeat, at sunset. It is pleasantly surrounded by well-watered pastures and fields, and we found very clean and nice night-quarters at the primitive little railway inn. Here we had the pleasure of meeting the new Superintendent of Monuments in Syria, M. Seyrig, very keen on

his job and very learned. He told us that he meant to begin at once to clear the temple wall at Palmyra.

The next morning we visited the mosque in Homs, with its stately minaret of patterned stones, as usual the heir of a temple and an early Christian church. Some of the antique columns and capitals are still to be seen, as well as a niche containing remains of early beautiful green and blue mosaic decorations. The name Homs seems to be a degenerate form of the ancient name Emesa (first mentioned by Pliny as Hemisa). It was the birthplace of Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus, whose son, Caracalla (211-217) was the first Syrian Emperor the Romans had. But the town is even better known as the birthplace of Elagabalus (218-222), the grandson of her sister, Julia Maesa, who managed to have the child proclaimed Emperor at the age of thirteen, having already made him high priest in the famous Emesa Temple of the Sun-god, Ba'al.

THE SACRED STONE OF EMESA

I looked vainly around in the mosque courtyard to see if any fragments were left of the sacred black stone marked with obscene symbols that Elagabalus brought from Homs and set up in Rome to be worshipped. Gibbon's description of its entrance into Rome is unforgettable.

In a solemn procession through the streets of Rome, the way was strewed with gold dust; the black stone, set in precious gems, was placed on a chariot drawn by six milk-white horses richly caparisoned. The pious Emperor held the reins, and, supported by his ministers, moved slowly backwards, that he might perpetually enjoy the felicity of the divine presence. In a magnificent temple raised on the Palatine Mount, the sacrifices of the god Elagabalus were celebrated with every circumstance of cost and solemnity. The richest wines, the most extraordinary victims, and the rarest aromatics, were profusely consumed on his altars. Around the altar a chorus of Syrian damsels performed their lascivious dances to the sound of barbarian music, whilst the gravest personages of the state and army, clothed in long Phoenician tunics, officiated in the meanest functions with affected zeal and secret indignation.

So ridiculous and indecent were the orgies that centred round the stone, which, among other things, was solemnly married to a stone brought from Egypt, that upon the Emperor's death the outraged people sent it back again to Emesa, where, in the meantime, the finer symbolism of Christianity was beginning to replace the early worship of stones to which mankind has ever been prone.

STONE WORSHIP

My mind wandered off to the sacred stones worshipped today which I had seen—to Mount

Moriah's "Rock" which we had left behind us in Jerusalem, and the Stone of Unction in the Holy Sepulchre, polished by Christian lips pressed upon it in the ecstasy of emotion; to the Rock in the Sanctuary of Monte Gargano which retains the impress of St. Michael's foot and around which the tongues of pilgrims annually trace a circle of blood; to the *Madonna del Pilar* at Saragossa, in its splendid rococo church, unceasingly adored by worshippers and pilgrims following each other in procession around the gorgeous shrine to touch with their finger-tips the stone hidden in the wall at the back of it. I recalled the famous *Notre Dame de Pilier* in the Cathedral of Chartres, where the Canons go in procession after office to sing anthems to the "Black Virgin," and where, as Rouillard wrote in 1608, "the usual crowd of pilgrims is so large and their devotion so great that the column of stone which supports the Holy Image is worn nearly to the breaking point by the kisses of devout Catholics." I recalled the candles burning before the chapel, with the pious offerings of gold and silver hearts, flowers and jewels, the priests who are constantly on guard before it, the children I saw being consecrated to it. I began to think of more primitive ceremonies and cults: of the sacrifice of sheep that we were told is still made on certain festivals before the pillar of a Christian church in the Jebel-Druse; of the meteoric stone

built into the wall of the Ka'ba at Mecca upon which today the faithful, in circling round the little shrine, stop to implant a reverent kiss. I regretted that the great Temple of Apollo (or Venus) at Hieropolis (the Holy City near the town of Aleppo to which our faces were set) had been entirely destroyed so that there was no longer a chance of evoking there the ritual by which the prosperity of Syria in ancient times was assured; for it was the custom that a couple of men, twice during the year, should ascend the two enormous phallic stones about a hundred and eighty feet high which stood in the vestibule of this temple, to remain there for seven days without sleeping, praying for the well-being of Syria and communing with the gods.[6] I recalled that even the Chosen People, finding everywhere among the Gentiles they conquered, especially among the Canaanites, innumerable sacred stones and pillars, like all invaders took up with the superstitions of the conquered, which were intimately bound up with the agricultural life of the country, so that they also became sedulous worshippers of stones and pillars in spite of Jehovah's fierce prohibition against giving homage or adoration to such objects. Solomon himself set up two brazen pillars before his Temple at Jerusalem, naming them "The Stablisher" and "In Him Is Strength." These have been taken as symbols of Jehovah but they were

perhaps inspired by Solomon's reprobated perversion to the old cults of the country, when he defiled the holy town of Jerusalem with worshipping in "the high places that were on the right hand of the Mount of Corruption which Solomon the King of Israel had builded for Astoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milkon the abomination of the children of Amon" (I Kings 11:5). Even Josiah, who "brake in pieces the images and cut down the groves and filled their places with the bones of men," who pulled down the altar of Bethel and stamped it to powder and burned the grove, nevertheless stood by a pillar in the House of the Lord to make a covenant with the people (II Kings 23:13). The legend recounted in Genesis of Jacob who "rose up early in the morning and took the stone that he had taken for a pillow, and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on the top of it," and the subsequent custom of carrying this stone to Jerusalem to be re-anointed and mourned over, were no doubt a myth and a ceremony invented to explain a heathen belief and to translate a fetishistic into a commemorative ritual.

Evidently stones have a strong hold on the religious imagination, and the cult of them lingered on into Christian times, so that the Council of Arles in 485 promulgated an edict against the worship of stones, trees, and fountains, which was

repeated, with the penalty of excommunication attached, by subsequent Councils down to the time of Charlemagne, who in 789 himself published a decree condemning the "foolish people" who still persisted in this worship. But old cults are hard to kill and down to the end of the fourteenth century ecclesiastical legislation was directed against stone-worship. Finally a compromise was made by placing statues of the Virgin on the original sacred pillars or stones as at Chartres and Saragossa. A member of the French Ministry of Mexico told me once that the peasants who came into the City of Mexico were especially fervent in their worship at one of the chapels in the cathedral, where it was found on investigation that the bejewelled and embroidered satin dress of the statue of the Virgin on the altar hid a crude black stone which had been the chief fetich of the country folk.

Many of these details, I must confess, were only a confused general impression in my mind when we looked for the Sacred Stone of Elagabalus at Emesa. As I have continued to read on this fascinating subject, Palestine and Syria have grown more and more mysterious; every hill I remember so well is crowned in imagination—as some are in reality—by stones, and I feel at times as if I had joined the pilgrims who circled and danced round them in worship. I see the worshippers—but here my imagination fails to make me a participant!—

bending to kiss the holy stone or anointing it with oil or the blood of animals sacrificed at its base. I stand in fancy under the sacred trees that were always planted by the stones and feel with a shiver the stirring of the immanent Ba'al that inhabits both stones and trees.

HAMA

The road to Aleppo, where we had planned to sleep, was too long to permit us the détours necessary to see what people told us afterwards is one of the most beautiful sites in all Syria, the town of Apamea, famous for its oils and perfumes and for its grapes which Elagabalus brought to Rome to make wine for his horses. Nor did we get to the lake of Homs made by the broadening of the river Orontes, though our desert-parched eyes longed for the sight of plenty and plenty of water. But this we found for our consolation at Hama, a town supposed to have been founded by Job, where giant wheels festooned with moss and ferns grumble and creak and sing all day and all night, as they drippingly raise the water from the low-lying Orontes to the level of the town on its banks and the fields that stretch behind. These great water-wheels are beloved by the townspeople, who give to each one its name. Certainly they were among the most unusual and picturesque sights of our whole trip. Alas! That same evening at Aleppo our friend

M. de Caix, whom we met there, told us he was travelling with the enthusiastic Irrigation Officer, who was pushing a scheme to replace them with mechanical pumps capable of supplying water to many more acres than is possible to the present lazy wheels turned only by the current.

Hama or Hamath, called by Josephus Amatha, was rebaptized as Epiphania by Antiochus IV Epiphanes and was thus spoken of under this appellation by early Christian authors. But the old name clung to it, as old names have a way of doing. Hama had a brief period of prosperity under a descendant of Saladin, the talented Abulfeda (b. 1270), who was known by an Arab name meaning "the king favoured by God." We spent a long time in the beautiful courtyard of the mosque, where antique columns, set up or lying on the marble pavement, fountains, cypresses and a deep well reflecting in its smooth surface some columns and the protecting dome they support,* make one of those quiet places for meditation and reverie that Moslem shrines so frequently offer. Many Christian shrines to be sure, standing alone, neglected and partly fallen in decay, are in their way equally moving. But you do not have to go out to seek these Syrian shrines, you enter them from a noisy,

* This building resembles the "Treasury" in the compound of the Great Mosque at Damascus. Another example, the only other, is to be seen in the Mosque courtyard at Homs. It is discussed by Van Berchem, pp. 174-5.

perhaps utterly banal street, and the four (or more) civilizations that have built them up, the gigantic foundations of the pre-Roman civilization, with its sun- and nature-worship, the Roman cult, to be read in the scattered columns and carved capitals, the early Christian and Byzantine traces, noticeable probably in the shape of the edifice and in some of the capitals, and then the Arab-Moslem, with its delicate stone ornamentation, its richly carved pulpits, its mihrabs of semi-precious stones, its stalactited portals, its fountains and cypresses—all wrapped in a soft veil of decay and neglect—have roots so deeply intertwined in human history, are so touching in their various appeals, that there is nothing on earth to compare with them.

CHAPTER X

ALEPPO

ALEPPO

IN Aleppo once. . . ." Was it this beginning of Othello's last speech, or might it have been photographs and reproductions of Aleppo's citadel with its arch-borne causeway that lured us there—the magic of a phrase, the promise held out by a picture? It had been in a way the goal of our whole journey, and when we began to approach so near that we thought every turn of the road would reveal the outlines of the town that had haunted our imaginations, we felt as children feel before the curtain goes up on their first theatre. At last there it was, the most eastern of Syria's big towns, with its domes and minarets and its fringe of cemeteries and fields, the lines and circles of green following the water-courses and marking the pools. And there, above all, was *It*—the citadel we had come so far to see, rising from the midst of the town on battlemented heights, touched with the red-gold light of the sunset, the huge sloping stone causeway leading to a giant portal supported by high brick arches of a deeper red with violet shadows—our dream coming true, coming more than

true, enhanced beyond imagination by the actualities of size and colour and surroundings, by sky and sun, and by the Sense of Adventure! We, our commonplace, twentieth-century selves, could now say, "In Aleppo once. . . ."

It is a temptation to leave it there, half seen through dreams, perhaps more real to us so than the actual noisy, modernized town. I should take the companions of my dream to only a few chosen spots—to our sunset haunt, the high part of the Firdusi cemetery whence, over the uneven graves that encroach on the rolling fields of grain, you see a few minarets and domes, and then the ineffable citadel and the giant causeway. We should wander through the level acres of neglected tombs and mausoleums and past the ancient quarries which look like the caverns of giants, to the Firdusi Mosque standing in an orchard of pistachio trees with a grape-vine pergola and a fountain in its ruined courtyard—again one of those melancholy and poignant Moslem shrines. Perhaps the dream would not be broken if we could find ourselves crossing the causeway to the citadel without having passed through streets clanging with trams and noisy with the hoots and the unbridled escape-valves of motors, and without having noticed the rising pile of brand-new, and of course hideous, government buildings destined to ruin every distant view of the town's one glory—if we could,

without preliminaries, find ourselves in front of the gate-tower, stern and impressive as mass but delicately rippled with Arab ornament. We should pass dreamily up and up through the several inside gateways, with their reliefs of serpents and of the Lion of Beybars, and find ourselves on the walled plateau with its ruins. Some one would be sure to point out to us the spot where Abraham camped and milked his cows and left to the town —then a mere cluster of tents and hovels—the name *Haleb* which means milk. As we are dreaming, we may accept the legend and the explanation (probably *ex post facto*) of the town's name.

We should quickly find ourselves on the walls looking out over the desert that stretches to the Euphrates—to Baghdad. "The Road to Baghdad" —who has not taken an Arabian Night's journey along it in imagination? We should see in our dream the ghosts of caravans coming up from the East with their silks and spices, jewels and ivory, and asses laden with salt, and catch echoes of the shouts of the armies that marched along the same track to take the town—Khosroes II, who burnt it to the ground in 611; Byzantine armies which beat against the citadel in vain; the Mongols under Hulagu who poured in from the north in 1287; Tamerlane, who again destroyed Aleppo in 1400; the Mamelukes; then the Egyptians under Ibrahim

Pasha; now the French with their Mandate . . . but here our dream breaks down into the sordid realities of frontier disputes, tariff vexations, Turkish bandits and the rest. No! we should rather dream back two thousand five hundred years and see Shalmaneser offering sacrifices at Aleppo to the mysterious god Hadad, and then, for time is nothing to dreams, picture to ourselves Alexander's general, Seleucus, baptizing (in vain) the town with the name of Beroea, and Julian on his expedition from Antioch against the Persians, stopping at the citadel to sacrifice a white bull.[1] We should see the buildings toppling down in the earthquake a hundred years ago that completed the ruin wrought by the Turkish janissaries. But above all we should indulge in our favourite sunset pastime, that of watching the shadows creep over the plain reducing the houses to pin-points of light in the darkness.

If a magic carpet should carry us from spot to spot in the town, we should wander through the sun-flecked streets of the bazaars and should get glimpses of many a mosque, enjoying especially the cool, domed Turkish interiors and the deserted courts. We should see the old Hammam, with its remains of delicate stucco decorations, and we should look with wonder at the half naked men who in a damp inner room are stamping out and rolling masses of felt, chanting as they work a

double ritornelle that sounds half like music and half like weird cries from a madhouse. Probably their occupation is as old as tents and carpets themselves.

We should need to have our wits more about us if we were wafted into the mosque called *Jami-el-Halawiyeh,* for we should have to perform that process, which becomes gradually more and more easy to the experienced sight-seer, of thrusting away all that is modern and imaginatively reconstructing the ancient appearance. In this case the restoration consists in a thick coat of shiny mustard-coloured paint smeared over all the stonework. When we entered, the Imam himself was there looking round with great satisfaction upon his deplorable handiwork. Nevertheless the fragment of Queen Helena's old church remains impressive and interesting. The apse and transepts, which are all that are left, are decorated with pilasters connected by a boldly sculptured frieze supported by the wind-blown acanthus columns that we knew already at Ravenna, and had seen recently in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the El Aksa Mosque at Jerusalem. But here on each side of the arch of the apse the acanthus leaves are blown in opposite directions, a very singular and beautiful effect that we saw again, unspoiled by paint, at Kalat-Siman. Still in this fragment of a Byzantine church the grand impress of classic antiquity

lingers on, placing it in a nobler and more spacious region than all the other mosques in the town.

KALAT-SIMAN

Our first excursion from Aleppo was to Kalat-Siman, the shrine of St. Simon Stylites. We took it in the company of Dr. R. Riefstahl of Constantinople and his young architect assistant, Mr. Charles, who had been with us in Damascus and now joined our party for the time of our stay at Aleppo. This church is considered by specialists in early Christian archaeology as being the most interesting, as it is the largest and least destroyed, of the early churches in Syria. Interesting I, too, found it, but not being a specialist in early Christian architecture, I am aware that anything I may have to say about it must be hopelessly inadequate. It has been elaborately published by Butler of Princeton,[2] and is discussed in comparison with other fifth-century churches by Beyer in *Der Syrische Kirchenbau.*[3] He gives a ground plan of the structure so admirably clear that I wish I could reproduce it, and he also gives the reconstructed façade and reproduces some of the capitals. Long before, De Vogüé visited it, and in the big volume (Volume II) of his *Architecture civile et religieuse du I-VII siècle* he gives a clear ground plan and a series of those engravings that

correspond so much better than most photographs to our visual images of architecture.

The drive from Aleppo, among bare rocks interspersed with narrow fertile valleys, was very pleasant. The last part was a swinging descent into the valley below the shrine, which towered above it on the scarp of a great rocky mound. It was not easy for me to climb up in the sun that already blazed above and beat up from the rock-side, although the day was still young, I having made an early start in company with the tireless Dr. Riefstahl. I was glad to rest in a shady corner outside the church, looking out on the view which led on across a green watered plain and rolling hills to the dreaming Taurus range on the northwestern horizon. The scent of pungent herbs and of honeysuckle perfumed the breeze that sweetly smoothed away all sense of fatigue and heat. Presently the rest of the party arrived, fresh and eager, and we began archaeologizing and photographing. But not to the detriment of our enjoyment, for the building is as beautiful as it is interesting. The plan is simple enough, the four arms of a Greek cross radiating from an imposing octagonal open space in the centre which is surrounded by columns with acanthus capitals connected by arches and a richly sculptured frieze. The first glimpse through the portal is of an in-

credible but ordered wealth of beautiful architectural details, like an organ fugue in stone.

I have never seen anything like this happy combination of basilica, Greek cross and central octagonal space. It was with surprise that I read in the *Travels* of Irby and Mangles that they did not turn aside to see the church since they learnt that it was "of the date of the lower empire" and "totally uninteresting." But I daresay I should have felt the same had I visited Aleppo a hundred years ago, equipped with the average, or even superior, culture of the time. De Vogüé's pioneer book was not published till nearly fifty years after these travellers had visited the region. Some people think that taste is instinctive, that appreciation springs up spontaneously at the sight of a beautiful object, of no matter what epoch. Reading, observation and experience lead me to believe that taste without culture does not carry one far enough. Taste alone is apt to limit itself to "I like" or "I don't like." Enjoyment of beauty starts with instinctive zest and curiosity but should not remain in the rudimentary phase of mere personal preference or repugnance. With the aid of culture the pleasing object becomes a vortex, so to speak, into which are drawn numerous currents of interest and enjoyment to flow out again and wake to fruitfulness many a latent sensibility. Education and culture bring to the aid of uninstructed enjoyment all the

powers of the mind. The truly cultured person must add to native love of beauty the appreciation and understanding of every mode of art that has ever exercised the creative faculty of man. Discrimination of values will necessarily follow; that can take care of itself. But taste itself is as susceptible to the education adapted to its special character as are the muscles of the body to physical training, and becomes what dancing and skating are to hopping and sliding. Discrimination of values is merely eliminating awkward and uncouth movements. This is, however, too big a subject to do more than glance at when we are thinking of St. Simon's Church as seen with the eyes of our present enlightenment.

In the middle of the extremely beautiful octagon stands the rough-hewn rock that served as base for the pillar upon which St. Simon Stylites passed his weather-beaten, moveless life. His first experiment in living on a column began in 422, but after seven years he moved up and fixed himself on a higher column (thirty-eight feet high the exact Baedeker says), there to die after thirty years. Curious, worshipping crowds in thousands surged around his feet, his pupils drinking in his words as he harangued the multitude, and Masses were said at the altar-stone of his pillar's base. It must have been soon after his death in 529 that the great shrine was erected, religious fervour sparing no

pains to make it worthy of so great a saint. The effect must indeed have been palatial and sumptuous. The arm with the apse still shows traces of red paint, and De Vogüé reproduces a section of a coloured moulding the details of which are now obliterated. Ruin is, alas! still encroaching on the edifice. I presume an earthquake threw down the roofs and the many columns that lie on the ground in confused masses, but time, though slower, is also an enemy. Since Gertrude Bell's book of 1907[4] many of the small columns that, in a double row one above the other, decorated the outside of the apse and which one sees *in situ* in her reproduction, have fallen down and lie about in a ploughed field that slopes down the hill to the huts in the valley. They are sure to be carried away for building.

One detail that we noticed with special interest was the ribbon-like ornamentation that ran around the tops of the windows and joined them together. This is often supposed to be a peculiarity of Seljuk architecture, and we had noted it at Konia and on the desert Seljuk khans in the region, but of course it became clear that they did not invent it, for here it was on a building more than half a millennium earlier.

As we stood on the rocky plateau which holds the shrine, the adjacent monastery and all the dependent buildings (including a fine octagonal domed church on the western edge which is now

the filthy dwelling-place of several Arab families), we saw on all the surrounding slopes the ruins of churches and buildings, the largest group being the almost deserted but fairly well preserved town of Deir Siman. There they lie, their stones as sharp and clean-cut as if the echo of the chisel stroke still sounded on the hill, cities as perfect as the day they were built, except where earthquake has cast them down. For this we must thank the Arabs before whom the inhabitants fled *en masse,* but who had no use for the towns thus deserted. Around them grain fields rippled in the wind, and here and there a walnut or poplar cast its shade, or little fruit orchards clustered beside a well. We chose a roundabout way and came down to our motors along the gently sloping and well-terraced west side of the hill, and this enabled us to see some of the old ruined pilgrims' hostels and the terrace and well where converts were baptized. Again the sunset lights and shadows caused us to linger, and we saw that our dragoman became much perturbed at the delay. His remarks about the police regulations of Aleppo requiring all vehicles to return to the town before sunset fell on deaf ears—but afterwards, although not on this excursion, we had to acknowledge that his anxiety was well founded. We lingered in fact so long—it is hard to leave beauty that one may never again look upon!—that by the time we saw, standing almost

alone on another rocky scarp, the outline of an early basilica we meant to visit in returning, it was quite too late to climb up to visit it, for dusk had fallen.

MAARAT EN-NOMAN

Kalat-Siman had so much interested and delighted us that we started with enthusiasm the next day to visit some more of these ruined early Christian shrines and towns which exist in great numbers in northern Syria. As the radius from Aleppo was too wide to accomplish all we wanted in one day, we had arranged to go to a small town about thirty miles distant, called Maarat en-Noman, getting horses from the police station there, and taking one excursion, returning to the village for the night, and another excursion the next morning. We started betimes, but on reaching Maarat en-Noman we found such sorry nags awaiting us that we could not bear to add to their misery by mounting them. At the police station we discovered that all the good horses were occupied in processions and demonstrations in honour of Jeanne d'Arc, and none was free for us till noon. We looked about at the only slightly interesting buildings of the town, which is thus described in the *Journey to Aleppo and Damascus*—already mentioned:

Almarah, or *al Marah al Naaman,* that is in Arabic the *Disease of Ostriches,* was once a considerable and strong city, as appears from several Vestigia. It is fre-

quently mentioned by the Holy War writers, having been taken by the Christians from the Mahommedans under the Conduct of the famous Boemand and Raimond, Count of St. Giles, in the year of Christ 1097, who dismantled it. It continued in a flourishing Condition for a long time after; but at present it hath lost all its former Splendours, being reduced to the Condition of a good village only, where there is nothing to be seen on every side, but Cellars and ruined Vaults.

We finally went to wait in the house of the Sheik, where our dragoman had arranged for us to spend the night. Our host, the town deputy and owner of three villages, was the richest and most important man in the place, and as we sat for an endless time (it seemed) in his reception room, drinking coffee and pouring out very thin conversation, drop by drop through the dragoman filter, we watched with interest the uninterrupted coming and going of various dependents and clients desirous of getting the great man's orders and advice, and marked how they invariably took off their shoes before entering his presence. When our interest began to change into indifference and then into active boredom, we realized that we had arisen very early and that an intolerable scirocco was burning us to our very bones, and we asked if we might go to the room prepared for us and rest until the horses came. Permission was graciously accorded, and we went to lie down. The room, however, was

creeping with vermin wandering about in broad daylight, so we were thankful indeed when at last the horses appeared. By this time we had made up our minds to return to Aleppo for the night, ruins or no ruins. But our troubles had only begun. No one was sure of the way and we rode for hours under the blazing sun whose heat the scirocco seemed only to drive deeper under our skins, our horses scarcely able to make their way along the stony paths we were guided to. Finally, entirely worn out, we reached Dana (we saw another Dana later on our way back from Antioch), where a fairly well preserved tomb with a portico of four Corinthian columns with wind-blown acanthus capitals and a pyramidal vault inside was the most interesting monument.

But it began to grow late, especially in view of the return ride and the long road to Aleppo, and Iskander showed great uneasiness, only too well justified by the event. So, most unwillingly, we gave up the other dead cities we had meant to visit—though it was nothing short of maddening to see the ruins of one of the finest of them all, Ruweiha, profiled against the sky line, and to know that there were over a hundred more within the space of the one hundred to one hundred and fifty mile triangle having the Orontes north of Hama, Apamea and Antioch as bases—Reha, Mondjileia, Dellonza, Refadi, Seyilla, Deir Seta, Deir Darin,

Kefr-Kilt, Sermede Khatoma, Kopomoza, El Barrett being among the best known, with scores of others still to explore. The description of them given by De Vogüé only added to our disappointment:

In passing through these deserted streets, these abandoned courts, these porticoes where the vine entwines itself about the broken columns, one receives an impression analogous to that which one experiences at Pompeii; less complete, because the climate of Syria does not protect its treasures like the ashes of Vesuvius, but more novel, because the civilization which one contemplates is less known than that of the age of Augustus. One is transported into the midst of Christian Society; one observes its life—not the hidden life of the catacombs nor the humble, timid, suffering existence which is commonly pictured, but a large, opulent, artistic life, in grand houses built of immense hewn stones, perfectly arranged, with carved galleries and balconies, beautiful gardens planted with vines, cellars and vessels of stone for preserving it, large subterranean kitchens, stables for horses, beautiful squares lined with porticoes, elegant baths, magnificent churches with columns, flanked with towers and surrounded with splendid tombs.

By one of those phenomena of which the East affords frequent examples, all these Christian cities were abandoned at the same time—probably at the epoch of the Mahometan invasion—and since that they have not been touched. Except that earthquakes have thrown to the ground many of the towers and columns, they lack only the beams and planks of the edifices.

We tried to console ourselves with our favourite phantom of "next time," planning to return with our own tents and horses and be dependent on no one.

Sadly we turned our horses back towards Maarat en-Noman. It was decidedly dusk when we rejoined our car, and presently, fifteen miles from Aleppo, we were stopped by the police who forbade us to go farther on account of brigands. It looked as if we should have to sleep on the rocks all night. We brought out the few influential names we knew and at last induced them to telephone from the wayside guardhouse to Aleppo to ask permission to return in the dark, we taking the risks (we did not know what they were!). After an hour's wait a reluctant permission was given, and we hurried on. Our chauffeur was frightened to death and scurried along at the rate of fifty miles an hour, while we all saw ambushes behind every rock, and menacing Turks in the sheep and camels along the road. We got in safely, luckier than some other motorists who just about this time, as we learnt later from a German newspaper (such incidents being suppressed in local journals), were held up, dragged from their car, stripped, put in a ditch and forbidden by a Turk with a gun to move. They were kept there, shivering, till seven other parties of motorists had come along, to meet with the same treatment. Then the brigands, piling all the

clothes, rugs, bags, and whatever else the cars contained, onto their own camion, made off, and their prisoners raced into Aleppo, freezing and naked as they were. Naturally Iskander Haiek, who was responsible for us, and whose dragomanic reputation would suffer if we met with any misfortune, was not happy over our sunset proclivities, but we rendered him only a tardy justice.

SCIROCCO

On this expedition we had by no means our first but our severest experience of the Syrian scirocco —or *Sherkeyeh*—which was our faithful companion through the whole month of May. In Italy the scirocco when it comes generally stays for three days; in Syria it flickers in and out like nothing so much as those swarms of gnats that at one moment surround the wayfarer and the next are gone. We had its visits every day, I think, but it seldom stayed with us the whole day. Sometimes it was a morning when we suddenly found ourselves breathless and bathed in purposeless sweat; sometimes it was an afternoon when the light cotton-woolly clouds gathered overhead and stifled us. Or it was a mere touch and away, an hour, half an hour; almost before we realized that it was on us, the wispy clouds streamed off and we drew in comfortable refreshing draughts of air. Only once again, after the Maarat en-Noman excursion,

did it oppress us for a whole day—the day we visited the Crac des Chevaliers. And not even then did we experience its full fury, when it comes on the wings of a vehement wind filling the air with dust and finely sifted sand, nor did we ever find it quite so oppressive as some people describe it—that comes later in the year: "The birds hide in the thickest shade and take shelter in caves and under great rocks; the labourers retire from the fields and close the windows and doors of their houses. No one has energy to make a noise and the very air is too weak and languid to stir the pendent leaves of even the tallest poplars." [5]

MESKENEH

Our friend, M. Eustache de Lorey of the Azim Palace in Damascus, and his fellow-excavator, M. Georges Salles, had waved before our enchanted eyes the possibility of spending a day with them at the excavations overlooking the Euphrates. Of course we could not refuse such an invitation, and one morning we started out to cross the fifty-odd miles of desert to get sight of the famous river and to share the fun of digging on its banks.

The first part of the way led us through numerous villages of the "bee-hive" type that had been interesting and amusing us ever since we entered the Aleppo district. Our only acquaintance with them thus far had been on Assyrian bas-reliefs.

Like mammoth growths of mushrooms these brown and whitewashed conical houses and granaries cluster together, often on the slopes of some ancient *Tell,* and always of course beside a spring or well. Man has never constructed for himself habitations more insect-like, and one speculates in vain about the characters and thoughts of those who dwell in them. Village after village dotted the desert, yet we never passed one without a thrill of excitement and wonder at their strangeness. As we approached the great river and got among the fantastically-shaped limestone rocks that shut in on the west the broad Euphrates Valley these villages ceased, and the few settlements that lay along the part of our road overlooking the river were of the more ordinary Arab character.[6]

The excavations were taking place at Eski Meskeneh, a short distance to the south of the modern village which now lies several miles from the right bank of the Euphrates, the river having changed its course since the days when this town, then the greatest river-port of the whole region between the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Persia, commanded the caravan road that connected Asia Minor and North Syria with Persia. First belonging to the ancient Persians, then to the Greeks (mentioned for the first time by Xenophon), the Romans gained possession of it, but lost it to the Sassanide Persians. Afterwards it belonged to the Byzantine

Empire and it still shows traces of Justinian's fortifications. It fell at last to the Arabs and remained theirs till our Great War, except for a brief interval in the early twelfth century when it was held by the Crusader, Tancred of Antioch. An inscription found on the spot tells that the town was rebuilt by the brother of the famous Saladin towards 1200, but its great days were already over, and it gradually fell into the present heap of ruins from which only the remains of a Byzantine brick church and a fine brick polygonal Arab minaret of the thirteenth century stand out.

The ancient town was called Balis or Barbalissus and its massive Roman walls and forum, temple and baths are gradually being uncovered. Of the sixteen acres within the old walls, however, a little more than a quarter has so far been excavated and much may be hidden there. For the present the chief finds are broken plates, jugs, and dishes of pottery, dating from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries, and probably of local manufacture. Many pieces were brought in fresh from the excavated trenches while we sat chatting with our hosts in the shady loggia between the two bedrooms that formed their shelter. On a terrace outside crouched an Arab, absorbed in the task of putting together the fragments brought in by the diggers—pieces of beautiful jars and plates of colours —blues and greens and rusty browns—that people

have forgotten how to make or use. It seems that he had appeared one day on his donkey and offered his services, refusing all remuneration until his skill had been tested. His long slender fingers were fitting piece after piece with delicate skill, and he scarcely looked up when we came. The only thing that distracted him from his superior jig-saw puzzle was a cigarette offered to him, as to all the excavators, when M. de Lorey assembled them in a row on the terrace for our inspection. Even then, the cigarette had to be lighted and placed in his mouth by another man so that he might not have to let go of the pieces of pottery he was manipulating.

The excavators were of all types, some of them of the hawk-nosed, lean Arab sort, others closer to the Negro race, others so European in looks that if they wore our clothes we could not tell that they were not our own kinsmen. One of the young men was a hashish addict, and his face looked relaxed and weak. We were told that stealing is the rule among the native excavators. They are of course searched when they leave the diggings to see if they have anything concealed about their persons, but they hide their best finds in the sand and get them perhaps afterwards when the excavation is closed down in the summer. However, towards the end, if special rewards are offered for rare finds, these rewards never go unclaimed!

We walked through the ruins and watched the excavations with interest; we ate the best lunch we had in Syria and had a rest, and then sat chatting quietly watching the never-ending procession of camels and donkeys, sheep and goats, travelling past us on the road below. The great river lay at some distance, and its muddy current was scarcely distinguishable from the low banks on the other side.

Far too early, we thought, Iskander began to show anxiety to start back, but we had not then heard of the acts of brigandage that were taking place, and we could not bear to miss the beauty that grew and grew as the sun dipped to the west. The great river, which had at first disappointed us, turned blue and silver, while little hillocks and shrubs threw long violet shadows across the golden plain.

ANTIOCH

Our visit to Antioch took place before the trip to the Euphrates, but I have left it to the end, because, although it was the most utterly enchanting thing we did in our whole journey, there is not much to say about it. My pen is tired of writing "beautiful," and I feel as if I ought to have saved up the word for that idyllic valley of the Orontes where once the third city of the Roman Empire stood. I haven't the vocabulary—few indeed

would have!—to convey any adequate impression of beauty so rare, so harmonious, so soothing as that of the site of Antioch!

Our road from Aleppo followed in a general way the Roman Road, long stretches of which were visible, and it led almost continually through ruins of Greco-Roman towns, of villas, of khans.[7] The road and inns were described by Chrysostom as being guarded by men armed with javelins, bows and slings, under captains entirely devoted to the service. We, also, met mounted policemen detailed to protect the road, but rifles had driven out the more picturesque arms of fourteen hundred years ago. When we had finally crossed the low mountain pass, we saw the Plain of Antioch, spread out before us. Instead of following the well-made Alexandretta road which crosses the plain and turns off to Antioch under the northern hills, we mistakenly took the old road which skirts the southern hills that frame in the plain. It was a horrible road, full of bumps, often deep in mud, but we were glad we took it, for our necessarily slow progress gave us more time to drink in the extraordinary beauty of the scene.

Only ten or twelve times in our lives has it been granted to us to find nature so completely adapted to all that is gentle and harmonious in the soul of man. Whether the charm lies in the rhythm of the hills that enclose these ancient valleys I cannot say.

The peace of spirit they engender "passeth understanding." The first time we definitely received from landscape this impression was when we stood on the slopes that overlook the plain of Sybaris, which is softly enarmed by low rocky hills that lead the Crassus to the sea. Then we recognized it again at Assisi, the harmony still lingering in that Valley of the Upper Tiber in spite of the smoke-stacks with which modern Italian enterprise seeks to break the spell. At St. Rémy in Provence and at Girgente we had the same sense of reconciliation between earth and man; also at Broussa, so like Assisi, looking over the vale; and again from the porch of the Church of Liveri, near Nola, where distant Vesuvius shows its gentlest face; above the enchanted valley of oranges and olives that one sees from the upper Church at Lorca, on the road from Granada to Murcia, where the soft slopes of the embossing hills lead the gaze gently towards what one senses to be the sea; from the hills behind Nicea, glimpsing the blue lake across the orchards of the ruined town; from the Villa Livia looking down the Tiber Valley to St. Peter's incomparable cupola faint against the distant sky; by the Lake of Galilee looking towards Mount Hermon, or down the lake from Capernaum; and, finally, from the rocks at Banyas looking down over the upper Valley of the Jordan. But the site of Antioch is the most completely satisfying of all these impres-

sions, and I do not think it is only because it is the most recent. Here the noise of "Time's wingèd chariot" ceases to be heard. There is no succession of minutes, hours, or days, the accidents of life are merged in its Essence. "We shall stay forever," we feel.

From the little hotel where we lodged we could hear all night the restful creaking of the huge river-wheels which here, as at Hama, were lifting up the reluctant water of the Orontes to supply the town and flood the fields, turning all the land into a divine oasis, and incidentally causing the fountain in our courtyard to pulsate with a slow rhythm. Our hotel was a many-windowed, eighteenth-century Turkish villa standing in its own garden, with charming large rooms, ceilings with painted stucco decorations, paved terraces, a pergola, and orange trees, under which the view, framed in green, gains an added loveliness.

We drove out in the afternoon to the Groves of Daphne, where the rich Antiochenes had their sumptuous villas and gardens. Nothing remains of that gorgeous past but a few scattered columns lying in the grass, and the ruins of an aqueduct. Here, as by the original Peneus, Daphne escaped the pursuit of Apollo by turning into a laurel; here the Sun-god and Hecate of the night, Artemis, Isis, Aphrodite and other deities had their temples, and, it appears, their orgiastic rites. But it seems that

the local cults were gradually smothered and softened to the Greco-Roman uniformity, the dark mysteries of the East attenuated by the more civilized rites of the Greeks. The fierce god hidden in the flames of the old Canaanitic altars took on the traits of Jupiter, and the savage Anaitis became the chaste Diana. Here Olympian games were held regularly from the reign of Caracalla (A.D. 212) down to the sixth century. But now only the waterfalls that leap down the face of the garlanded rocks in a deep closed dell remain unchanged. In a cool bower of overhanging laurels and oaks, by one of the springs which rose in a deep swaying crystal pool and hurried off down the cliff, we drank our tea and tried to call up the past. We could not recite the pages in which Gibbon has described the grove, but we remembered his description of the Temple of Apollo, "one of the most elegant places of devotion in the pagan world," and we recalled the colossal figure of the god adorned with gold and gems that stood in it. We thought of the discomfiture of the Emperor Julian, who hastened thither on the day of the annual festival, expecting to find the innumerable worshippers, the long processions of youths and maidens, the hecatombs of fat oxen, the flowing libations and the clouds of incense that once celebrated the day, and found only "a single goose, provided at the expense of the priest, a pale and solitary in-

habitant of the decayed temple. . . . The altar was deserted, the oracle had been reduced to silence, and the holy ground was profaned by the introduction of Christian and funeral rites," a magnificent church having been erected on the site, over the remains of Babylus (a Bishop of Antioch who died in prison during the persecution of Decius). In vain did Julian send back the saint's body to his original church in Antioch. The same night the Temple of Daphne went up in flames—the interposition of heaven, as the Christians declared—and the statue of Apollo was consumed. A festival at Daphne when it was still entirely pagan was one of the three things we wished we could have experienced, the second being the marriage of Antony and Cleopatra which was celebrated in 37 B.C. at Antioch "the Beautiful" (as it was called in antiquity), and the third the hearing of one of the fiery and eloquent sermons of St. John Chrysostom. But we were happy, too, sitting by the spring, and listening to the music of the cascades, and happy driving back in the twilight, and going out to stand on the infinitely romantic aqueduct above Antioch and abandoning our souls to the gentle melancholy of the scene.

How can I break this remembered mood by mere facts? At least there are no existing visible facts at Antioch to arouse archaeological passions. Not a column remains of all the elaborate and

sumptuous town that once stretched across the wide river. Nature has hidden in her bosom all vestiges of the busy life that used to meet for trade and for philosophical discussions under the great arcades. There is still a small village, mainly Turkish, where the men sit all day smoking in the cafés and the women are scarcely seen; but walk a few paces, and you are in quiet groves of olives and poplars and oaks, where goatherds and shepherds pipe to their flocks, and where the strange insistent tom-tom of a distant drum suggests far-away rites and primitive emotions. The total disappearance of Antioch is somewhat of a mystery. True, it was sacked again and again by Persians, by Romans, by Arabs, but human destruction is never so complete as all that. Perhaps the earthquakes explain it, for ever since its foundation by Seleucus Nicatis in 301 B.C. these cataclysms have been often recorded. A terrible one shook down the buildings in 184 B.C., another in A.D. 37, and a still more destructive one in 115. In 457-8 the island quarter was utterly destroyed, in 526 twenty-five thousand people were buried in the ruins, and five thousand again a few years later. Only two sarcophagi that now stand in the garden of the *serai* (Government House) bear witness to the past.

But stay, I forget the Great Wall—how could I?—the most wildly improbable wall in the world, climbing up and pitching down unscalable cliffs in

its vain endeavour to shut out the invader. In some places the wall rises to forty feet or more, but it has mostly fallen ruined to a less imposing height. Only on the rugged Mount Silpius does it keep its useless guard, for what surrounded the town on the plain has, since 1870, been used for building the new town. The morning after our arrival, waked at daybreak, this time not by flies but by the chirping of the swallows and the swish of their wings as they flew in and out of my room, which had as usual small round openings in the wall above the shuttered windows, I got up and breakfasted at five o'clock, and then walked up one of the deep ravines that divide the various peaks of Mount Silpius, to where the famous "Iron Door" once stood. The iron is gone, but the great Roman barrier is there, straddling the chasm, in form something like a gigantically tall triumphal arch. It once had an iron sluice that could be raised to permit the overflow of the mountain stream that rushes down in the winter with great force. Again I feel my powers of description inadequate to convey the super-romantic quality of that mountain walk along a stony ledge clinging to the cliff, each turn revealing a new series of jagged rocks and towering peaks rising one behind the other, and then at last leading to the vast man-made barrier deserted by its makers and their foes alike. This "Iron Door" continues the precipitous wall that climbs

up round Mount Silpius, and is built not in the grand Roman way with vast blocks of stone, but in the Byzantine fashion of alternate courses of brick and stone set in thick mortar, with a core of rubble in the lower middle arch. Along the narrow path I met a constant stream of peasants carrying their small produce to the market, of donkeys piled high with wood or brushwood, of small traders or modest travellers astride mules or tough mountain ponies. From a distance they looked like a train of ants creeping along their way, intent upon their own human-ant affairs. I sat for an hour on a rock watching it all. Such an hour one never forgets or regrets. Only I was slightly haunted by a feeling almost of wickedness in having all this enjoyment. My husband had said the night before, "If you enjoy this trip so much, Mary, it is worth while." *Why,* I kept thinking, is it worth while to pour out money and energy and the work of three men and a maid for a lazy old lady of sixty-five to enjoy sights? I could formulate no answer to this question, but somehow the appreciation of the beauty of the world and the deeper understanding of the achievement of man that travel gives seem irrefutably of the essence of life, like Love or Goodness, and after a time, sitting there, my conscience ceased to trouble me.

The rest of the party came along after breakfasting at a more reasonable time, and then we

climbed the opposite slope and saw the colossal bust, presumably of a deity, carrying a smaller female figure on its shoulders, carved in the living rock by order of Antiochus Epiphanes to avert a pestilence from the city. One hopes it was more successful than the great wall in keeping out the enemy!

When we left Antioch and turned our backs on the divine valley so gently protected by the two mountainous ranges that meet in a soft slope to the west, a less impressionistic mood took possession of us. We tried to recall all we knew of the town—little enough, indeed, though the name wakes long echoes in the mind. Vaguely we remembered Gibbon's description, which it is not inappropriate to quote here:

The warmth of the climate disposed the natives to the utmost intemperate enjoyment of tranquillity and opulence; and the lively licentiousness of the Greeks was blended with the hereditary softness of the Syrians. Fashion was the only law, pleasure the only pursuit, and the splendours of dress and furniture was the only distinction of the citizen of Antioch. The arts of luxury were honoured; the serious and manly virtues were the subject of ridicule; and the contempt of female modesty and reverent age, announced the universal corruption of the capital of the East. The love of spectacles was a taste or rather passion of the Syrians: the most skilful artists were procured from the adjacent cities; a considerable share of the revenue was devoted

to the public amusements; and the magnificence of the games, of the theatre, and circus was considered as the happiness and the glory of Antioch.

On this background we could see the severe figure of Julian the Apostate, who spent the winter of 362-3 in Antioch writing his satire against the licentious and effeminate manners of the place and composing his treatise against the Christians—both in vain, for manners were not changed, and in the time of Constantine the town became almost wholly Christian, being the seat of the premier Patriarch of the Eastern Church, and the successful rival of Christian Alexandria. The Antiochenes even claimed St. Peter as their original Bishop, on the slender and contentious foundation of St. Paul's statement that here he had "withstood Peter face to face" (we should like to have seen *that!*). More authentic is the statement that it was at Antioch that the followers of Jesus, converts made by Paul and Barnabas, first received the name of "Christians." But the triumph of Christianity did not change the luxurious and worldly habits of the inhabitants. We pictured St. Chrysostom, thundering in vain against their excessive fondness for personal ornament; his holy wrath had no effect upon the tyranny of fashion; the women crowded to hear his sermons but kept their false hair and their rouge; the men acknowledged him as their spiritual director, but did not give up their phil-

osophical discussions in the shade of the Daphne wood, nor their fondness for the circus.

Nevertheless, the town was fervently religious, as is shown in erection of sanctuaries and convents, hostels, hospitals, schools, asylums, which were built in spite of the attractions of the theatre and circus, and which were initiated in the so-called "dead cities" like Kalat and Deir Siman, which, offshoots from Antioch, were once very much alive. De Vogüé thus describes the towns of this period which owed their origin to Antioch:

> The society reproved and guided by the preacher-saint relives in its entirety in these monuments, with its refinements and its humilities, its works of art and of charity, its solid comfort and luxury and its sincere faith; beside the rich villa we may find the school, beside the public bath the church, alongside the sumptuous tomb the ecclesiastical hostel, and everywhere the Cross sculptured on the stone and painted on the walls witness to the Christian spirit which animated the inhabitants of these dwellings ["We do not blush," said Chrysostom, "at this once abhorred symbol, on the contrary, we are proud of it."]; everywhere also the Greek line and edge, the acanthus leaf, and still more the surety of method points to the Greek education and the Greek culture of the builders.

Upon all this, confounding Paganism and Christianity, came the Arabs, destroying temples and churches alike. They held the town until the Crusaders under Godefry de Bouillon took possession

of it in 1098. Encouraged by divine portents, these ardent followers of the Cross made a "general massacre" of the inhabitants. Bohemond was king here for a brief period, but in 1170 the French quarter was destroyed by an earthquake, a less encouraging portent. In 1298 Beybars took it back for the Moslems; and theirs it remained until the conclusion of our Great War.

We returned by the Alexandretta road, and were able, with a short détour, to see the funeral monument at the northern Dana, an exquisite little open-air building on a high platform of four Ionic columns and surmounted by heavy moulding with a small truncated pyramid rising from the middle of the roof. It is reproduced by De Vogüé[8] as standing solitary over ruined tomb-covers; but now a noisy and filthy little town has spread around it, stones have been taken from its platform, and it may fall to ruin before the French Service des Antiquités is able to reach out to save it. Complete demolition has recently overtaken the Church of Turmanin—in De Vogüé's day perhaps the best preserved of all the churches in this region of North Syria—so, although we were near the place where it stood, we did not turn aside to mourn over the site. The Franciscan church on Mount Tabor is supposed to be an exact replica of it—but how dead and mechanical in line, how harsh in colour, how machine-made, alas, it looks!

CHAPTER XI

LATAKIA TO TRIPOLI

PAYS DES ALAOUITES

OUR drive from Aleppo to Latakia, which is on the coast, took us through a lovely and fertile hilly country, rich in olive groves and grain fields. Along the first part of our way we were accompanied, as we had been between Hama and Aleppo, by thousands of brilliant little birds with blue and green and yellow plumage. They sat in vast companies upon the telegraph wires and flashed across the road and fields as we came near. It took me some research afterwards to find out that these gaily coloured birds were one of the varieties of bee eaters.

Later on, we again entered the valley of the Orontes, crossing it at Djiar esh-Shogar by a picturesque old bridge, before climbing up into the mountains behind Latakia, where begins the "Pays des Alaouites," or followers of Ali. It is the ancient Northern Phoenicia, of which the Orontes and the Nahr Saroub form the eastern boundary, the mountains south of the plain of Antioch the northern, the coast the western and the river Nahr el Kebir the southern. This semi-independent

state contains about eight thousand square miles, being less than a hundred miles from north to south and anything up to thirty miles from east to west. Not larger than most French *départements,* it is as rich in history as any region of the earth. Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Jacquot's "Guide" to the district is crammed with every sort of accurate and thoughtful information about the land and its inhabitants.[1] He prefaces it with the following brief enumeration of what it contains: "Cities three thousand years old—Temples of ancient Syrian cults—capitals of the Ancient World—the Sanctuary of Apollo—the citadels of the 'Old Man of the Mountains'—majestic feudal fortresses—towns filled with Moslem traditions—belated practisers of the old lunar cults—the descendants of the 'Assassins' . . ." Even to this extraordinary list much might be added, such as Neolithic sites, some of the most interesting of Hellenistic remains, beautiful Crusaders' churches, Phoenician and Greek tombs, lovely mosques, old and new, scenery of unsurpassed beauty—where indeed shall I stop?

LATAKIA

We reached Latakia for lunch and drew up at a fine-looking new hotel standing a little outside of the town on a shore of low flat rocks, upon which the waves rose and fell with a pleasant murmur. We mounted the marble steps with happy expecta-

tions of clean and comfortable rooms overlooking the blue sea. Sometimes on remembering what happened there, I am of a mind to tell it, for it was there that I took my first step towards saint-hood, and sometimes I think I will pass it over in silence, for the occasion of my merit was extremely sordid. In the dilemma I have tossed up a penny and heads have it, so I will speak. After all, it may suggest a way of escape to others from some of the unsavoury incidents of travelling in these lands.

Well! the first thing I saw on entering the room allotted to me was a bug crawling over the pillow. Such a horror seized me that I felt I could not stay in that room, and I fear I expressed my feeling with some vehemence to my companions. Though the morning's drive had been a long one and the road to the next possible stopping place at Tripoli was as long again, though they were pining (so was I) to explore Latakia, the ancient Laodicea ad Mare, they were angelic enough to say without hesitation, "Of course you can't stand it—we will go on at once." Their kindness melted away my fury and impatience. A certain amount of repugnance and disgust remained, but this seemed so unimportant compared to the disappointment and inconvenience I was proposing to inflict upon the party! I reflected that a bug does no more harm than bite one, he carries no infection like the ma-

larial mosquito and the typhus louse—who is so cowardly that he cannot endure a mere bite? My spirit grew suddenly entirely at peace about the whole thing. I took a short rest upon the very bed (after spraying it with the invaluable Flit), and then we went out to see the town.

Ghosts of dead and gone Phoenicians accompanied our steps, of Assyrians and Persians, of Alexander and of Laodice, the mother of his general Seleucus, who gave the town her name, of Mithridates, of Herod, the great Builder, of Zenobia's splendid but fragile empire, of the Byzantine Emperors, the Crusaders, of Tancred and Saladin, of tremendous earthquakes throwing down all the glorious buildings. Such ghosts cannot be shaken off when you travel in this history-haunted land, the meeting-place of all the nations, where the earth's crust makes a practice of tumbling to ruins the monuments wherewith successive civilizations have adorned it. Almost nothing is left of the antique town which was described as *"une ville riche: . . . partout des palais, des portiques,"* before Saladin pillaged it and his Emirs carried off its beautiful marbles to enrich their own dwellings. The squalor of the present Turkish town, which, small as it is, is crammed with discordant religions—Mahometans, Orthodox Greeks, Gregorian Armenians, Maronites, an American missionary station and a French convent school

—is only accentuated by the brand-new quarter in which, on boulevards and new straight streets, the French offices, banks, officers' houses and barracks are situated. We wandered along the water's edge, lingering on the beach and in the olive groves. But most of our time was spent studying and enjoying the impressive temple still standing, which dates from an epoch differently placed from 40 B.C. to the reign of Septimius Severus, but which to us looked rather later. The cupola was probably added when the tetrapylon was transformed into a Christian church, but it must be one of the earliest remaining examples of its kind—a vault over a cube supported on triangular pendentives.[2] Its façade, giving on a garden, is like a great triumphal arch, supporting a powerfully moulded entablature, above which rises a kind of attic storey adorned with a relief representing the implements of war.[3] Again the antique dwarfs all else to insignificance; the temple and the "Columns of Bacchus" near by, that perhaps belonged once to a colonnade attached to the temple, rise above the low native dwellings, shaking them off, as it were, like a giant disencumbering himself of a crowd of pigmies swarming on his feet. Afterwards we rather languidly inspected some empty rock tombs, and then climbed a hill and had our tea in the courtyard of the modern but charming Mograbin Mosque, before reluctantly return-

ing to the ill-omened hotel. Here further surprises in the way of bad management and filth and neglect discouraged the whole party to such a degree that we all decided to move on to Tripoli the next day and do what excursions we could from there.

I may add in honour of the penny I threw that I passed a mentally tranquil although physically somewhat disturbed night, collecting trophies to exhibit to the inn-keeper the next morning with a recommendation to have my bed thoroughly gone over and disinfected. He vowed that he had never heard of any such thing before, and as I was leaving I saw the chambermaid making up the bed with fresh linen, with no preliminary inspection or cleaning!

SAHAYUN

The next morning we devoted to an excursion up into the Ansariyeh mountains behind Latakia to see the Crusading Castle of Sahayun, also known as Sahyoun, Saõne, and Sion. The road led along a stream bordered with oleanders through flowery plains and olive groves to the little mountain town of Haffe, about thirty miles inland, populated by Kurds, Armenians, Orthodox Greeks and Alaweyehs. Here we were met by a handsome and intelligent young French officer who had prepared excellent mounts to carry us up the steep and stony

mule-track that led to the castle. Our first view of this, the most picturesque and largest of all the Frankish ruins, was from a hilltop opposite to the tongue of rock on which it stands between two deep ravines with excessively precipitous sides. The horses had to be abandoned here, and it took more than half an hour of steep descent and toilsome climb to reach the rocky platform girdled by the walls of the old *Crac*.

Of course it is not simply Frankish in origin—nothing is simple in this history-scarred land! It began as a Phoenician stronghold and was ceded to Alexander. It was taken by the Byzantines in 975 and was still theirs at the time of the First Crusade. Early in the twelfth century it fell to the Crusaders, who rebuilt it and made it one of the strongest of their fortresses. They held it until 1188 when Saladin somehow—I can't think how, seeing the apparent inaccessibility of this eagle's nest!—got hold of it. It was not abandoned until after the Ottoman conquest. Nothing but a tiny Turkish village now gives it life.

No description can convey the aspect of this overwhelmingly picturesque place. The two deep valleys with streams, that join far below the western edge of the plateau on which the castle stands, protect three sides, and on the east side, by which it might be attained, an immense gash has been made in the solid rock more than three hundred

feet long and a hundred in height, with a width of fifty feet or so. In the middle of this colossal artificial cut, a gigantic tapering obelisk of rock was left standing to uphold the drawbridge that once gave access to the stronghold. There is really nothing like it on earth! Stalls for horses were hollowed in the sides of the cut and above them tombs and a vaulted chamber. All the appurtenances of such a fortress are still to be seen—donjon, guard-room, banqueting hall, stables, magazines, cisterns, watch towers, chapel, oil-presses, crenellated walls: nothing is lacking, except the drawbridge, to complete the impression. It is peculiarly interesting in that it offers the most complete and best preserved example of a feudal castle of the twelfth century. Most of the Crusaders' *châteaux* were either destroyed or transformed in the thirteenth century by Moslem princes into military forts.

I love the picturesqueness of these castles and would go far to see them, yet I feel a certain unexciting sameness about the actual buildings themselves. Here I know I write myself down as great a Philistine as the friend who found Roman ruins "so monotonous." But there it is. All over Europe I have seen so many mediaeval and early Gothic ruins that I should scarcely turn a corner to see another, unless it had beauty of site. The taste for them does not grow on me like

the taste for antique ruins, or even for mosques, or Baroque architecture, or what not. I regret it.

And now that I am confessing, I will add that I hate the Crusaders! I hate them partly for the contrast between the idealism of their aims and the utter sordidness of their behaviour, though this attitude ill becomes one who has lived through the Great War; and partly because, somehow, I feel more responsible for the failure they made of it than for the fall of any other power, whether Assyrian, Persian, Egyptian, Roman or Arab. These I can view dispassionately and note their collapse without bitterness (all but Greece: the death of Alexander is almost a personal tragedy!). Of course brave and beautiful figures of knights who took part in this great romantic Adventure stand out against the horrid background of avarice, cruelty, disloyalty, stupidity and deception; and of course their castles and fortresses are picturesque beyond imagination. All the same, I shudder to think of them and their two centuries of resultless muddle, defeat and disaster.

However, I cannot deny that Sahayun was worth all the days of aching that followed the difficult ride and the climb. Certainly it has left even in me a longing to see them all in their grand mountain settings, all the Crusaders' strongholds in Syria and Palestine, although I daresay I should be con-

tent with looking at them from a certain distance and should not insist on climbing up the stony paths to see their ruins near at hand.

CRAC DES CHEVALIERS

The "Crac des Chevaliers," for example, to which we made an excursion a few days later from Tripoli, was to me at its most delightful as we were approaching it, or even more as it appeared from the Monastery of St. George across a river and valley at the other side. From there it looked like Windsor—Windsor as it must originally have been—but here the fortress is set high on a lonely rock among crags. The castle is more homogeneous than Sahayun. Kurds had lived there, but it was built anew by the Knights Hospitallers to whom Raymond II, Count of Tripoli, ceded it about the middle of the twelfth century. Earthquakes, however, kept shaking it down, and it was not till after 1202 that it took its present shape. It was called Jamah el Frange—the French Flame—and it played a great military rôle in the operations of the Hospitallers against Homs and Hama. Its strategic position, barring the eastern route through these towns to the coast, was compared by Arab chroniclers to *"un os placé en travers le gosier des Musulmans."* All the country round was tributary to it. Yet by 1267 it had begun to decline and in 1271 it capitulated to the Sultan

Beybars. The "Old Man of the Mountains," Ismail Bey, got permission from the Sultan Beybars to live in it, but he was killed in the hills near by.

This castle has been carefully studied and measured and described by more than one writer and savant,[4] and the French Service des Antiquités has classed it as a *monument historique* and has begun to restore it to its original state, overcoming, little by little, the difficulties caused by the fact that five hundred and eighty natives live within its walls, with all their cattle, and that the inhabitants have never hesitated to make use of the stones of the ancient castle for their own purposes. For me, the view from the tower, which comprised the Lake of Homs, the Orontes, the Ansariyeh range and the coastal plain, was more enjoyable than creeping through half cleared vaults or noting the details of the windows and the arrangements for killing Moslem invaders. The Great Hall, however, was a fine bit of the best sort of Gothic, recalling the Sainte Chapelle, and the Latin inscription in twelfth-century characters was amusing:

Sit tibi copia,
Sit sapientia
Formaque detur;
Inquinat omnia sola
*Superbia, si cometetur.**

* May you have abundance, wisdom, beauty, but beware of pride, which tarnishes all it touches.

On leaving the Crac we drove around below it to the Greek Monastery of St. George, which lies at the back about six miles away. It is chiefly interesting for the view of the fortress which I have mentioned. It traces its foundation to Justinian and is said to have been occupied by Greek monks ever since. Some of them, of incredible age, crept out of their cells to blink at us as we stood in the courtyard. We saw the Treasure without much enthusiasm, but we had an excellent picnic lunch and a rest on scrupulously clean although very hard beds.

ROAD TO TORTOSA

We returned to Latakia, rescued our maid from the insect-haunted hotel, and set out for Tripoli. We were tempted, but it would have meant another night in the filthy hotel, to go some ten miles up the coast to see the interesting excavations that were then being carried out by the French Archaeological Missions in the tombs of the now solitary and disused port of Minet-el-Beida. The finds have since been well reproduced in the *London Illustrated News* (November 2, 1929), and go to prove that the harbour and adjoining town were there as early as 1300 B.C., and in close relation with Cyprus and Egypt and Crete. The plan of one of the sepulchres is very like one of the Royal Tombs discovered by Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos.

Bronze weapons, alabaster jars, Mycenaean ivories, Egyptian figures of Horus and terra-cotta tablets covered with a cuneiform writing in a hitherto unknown language were among the finds, which have been distributed between the museums at Latakia and Beirut and the Louvre.

PHOENICIAN TOWNS

But we had no time to spare, and we continued our way more or less along the seashore and through the sites of Phoenician towns, of which all that remain are a few rock-hewn tombs, and two sepulchral monuments at Amrit,[5] probably the most ancient monuments in Syria, one a rude obelisk between thirty and forty feet high, and the other a monolith set on a pedestal adorned with sculptured lions at the corners. A hollow resembling a quarry was apparently the remains of a town carved out in the rock itself. We saw the house where Renan lived when he was carrying out his Mission Archéologique in 1860-64. But alas, owing to our misadventures at the Latakia hotel, we had to give up any detailed exploration of the sites, and, worse still, we could not make the excursion we had set our hearts on to Hosn Soleiman, the ancient sanctuary of the Nosairis, who built it at a time when they were dominated by the Phoenicians and when their religion was entirely Semitic in character. It is the finest mon-

ument in the Phoenician style existing, built of huge cut blocks larger than any others in Syria, except those at Baalbec. Up to now the entrance façade is said to be standing, but the Priests' College (?) and a small temple are gradually disappearing, the stones being broken up and carried away to be used in modern constructions. This consideration made us so sad to miss seeing it that when we reached Tortosa, on our way to Tripoli, we called at the government offices and arranged to come back the next day and pick up a small Ford car for the thirty-odd miles of difficult road to Hosn Soleiman. After all, it would only mean retracing our steps for another thirty miles.

TORTOSA

The sun in its course forbade us to linger in Tortosa, but never shall we forget the overwhelming impression of entering the glorious and now deserted Crusaders' Church in that town. The subdued golden colour of the stone, the slender pillars with strange, lovely capitals, vaguely Corinthian, the vaulting and the old shrine built against a pillar in the nave, dedicated to Our Lady but probably embodying a much older cult, and worshipped by both Christians and Mahometans—and, above all, the light filtering through the pointed windows and turning it all to the likeness of some enchanted castle under the sea—make of

this church one of the most memorable impressions in Syria. It is heartbreaking to consider the tasteless modern churches put up in Jerusalem by architects who had a model like *this* before their eyes! The walls of the old castle within which the present town is huddled (I do not speak of the clean and airy new French quarters) are also very impressive, built out of vast drafted blocks probably from an early Phoenician fortress.

TRIPOLI

But we could not stay long, with that difficult road still to traverse, and we knew that if we could not stand the hotel at Latakia, it would be fatal to try the one at Tortosa, so we hastened on. We looked longingly at the picturesque island of Ruad which lies opposite to Tortosa less than two miles away, with its Saracenic castle, its megalithic seawalls, and the remains of antique columns near the harbour. A visit there had to be relegated to that "next time" of our fond hopes.

Owing to the badness of the last stretch of road from Amrit on, we arrived in Tripoli long after dark. Our first impression of the Hotel Plaza was disastrous, but afterwards we found that the proprietor was a willing and helpful man and did his best according to his lights. These lights were certainly not kindled at any European flame, save in the matter of scrupulous cleanliness, but in a

way it was interesting for once to see what a native up-to-date Syrian hotel was like. The bedrooms all opened off a long hall or room where the guests practically lived. They were shaved there, they read the journals, took iced drinks and sat and sat and talked and talked interminably. Female servants were continually going in and out of the room next to mine bearing dishes and drinks, and now and then the masculine voice of the Pasha, who had brought his family with him, would silence the otherwise uninterrupted feminine twittering of the improvised harem. The light blazed all night through the transoms and the voices went on and on, till the glow of morning paled the electricity and warned the talkers that it was now or never if they were to sleep. Others who had slept earlier promptly came along to prevent any interval of silence. And outside there was a real inferno of noises, from building operations, motors, street-calls, lively conversation or quarrelling in the piazza, and what not. The morning after we arrived a tremendous din was going on. It was a Moslem holiday, and people began at daylight to drive about in cars decorated with flowers, blowing their horns to desperation, while high and penetrating strains of Arab music and the thud of Arab drums were heard from every side whenever the bands that were playing in competition at opposite sides of the square, took a rest.

We gathered up our courage all the same and walked through the town to the Fortress, from whence we had a delightful view of the river, Nahr abou Ali, rushing down from the Lebanon, and of the Dervish monastery nestled in a romantic bend of it, where we got a general idea of our wanderings. The town appeared to us to be set in one of the most favoured spots in all Syria, for the broad well-watered maritime plain and the nearby mountains place every variety of climate and culture within easy reach of the inhabitants. Miles and miles of enchanting fruit gardens, figs, oranges, apricots, pomegranates, hedged with boughs of clematis and watered by thousands of silver streamlets from the river, spread around the town. The mountains behind are picturesque beyond description. They rise abruptly and the strata are strangely and grotesquely twisted and marked, as if a boiling mass had been thrown into water and suddenly cooled in its seething commotion. We also visited the chief mosque, which has a good stalactite portal in the Mameluke style, with a minaret that looked older, and came back much cheered to lunch.

In the afternoon our dragoman took us to one of the Maronite villages on the Lebanon, where he picked up his friend, the *Mudir,* who accompanied us to the Maronite monastery already mentioned. We stood awhile on the broad terrace looking at

such a pastoral scene as one might well see on the lower slopes of some Swiss mountain, and we then motored on along roads bordered with the pale lilac blossoms of the flowering jacaranda-tree, to a spring in the valley, where, on an island shaded with huge planes and walnuts, little tables were set out beside the rushing water. At a table near us a boy was singing with a fine voice those curious twittering and plaintive cadences of the Arab music. We were served with excellent Persian tea. The crowd was very well behaved and made upon us a charming impression. As none of the women were veiled, we presumed that they were Christians from the Maronite villages in the neighbourhood.

The next day, in one of the heaviest sciroccos of our scirocco-haunted trip, we made the expedition to the Crac des Chevaliers which I have already described. We got back to Tripoli in time to drive out to the port, El Mina, which lies on a promontory about a mile away from the modern town. There was not much to see except the picturesque islands that help to form the harbour and the ruins of the castle built by Raymond of Toulouse, and we came back and had tea in the quiet marble courtyard of a mosque set in the cemetery, modern, but with a beautiful old pavement of coloured marbles and some antique columns. A tank in the courtyard contains some sacred fish which used to

escape in time of war to fight for the Prophet against the Infidels, returning to Tripoli when peace came. The same legend attaches to a tank at Acre, and both are doubtless remains of an ancient Phoenician cult. Even now at certain seasons, pilgrims come with offerings and sacrifices to worship these sacred fish. Climbing the minaret, we had another good view of the fruit orchards that surround the town and of the streams that descend from the Lebanon and water the plain. Around our feet stretched the straggling graveyard where the women of Tripoli in black draperies were holding their Friday picnic, planting fresh bushes of myrtle, or palm branches, in the small holes left on purpose at the head and foot of each grave, and scattering flowers. At the edge of the cemetery a ring of men were dancing to the monotonous thud of a drum struck with the knuckles and to the thin piping of rustic flutes. They formed an interlocked circle, and the "dancing" consisted in stamping in unison as they revolved in a slow circle.

ISMAELIS OR ASSASSINS

Passing along this coast, with its ruins of Crusading churches and the mosques of the present ruling religion, one is always conscious of something mysterious in the hills behind, the secret practices of ancient cults, the continuation of rites that antedate Christianity, the underground adher-

ence to superstitions which no Crusader understood. Assassins, Nosairis, Metawilehs—one cannot travel in this part of Syria without hearing their names and wondering about them. M. Dussaud has written an account of the Nosairis,[6] Maurice Barrès of the Assassins,[7] and Père Lammens of them both and of the Metawilehs as well,[8] and one of the first things I did on getting home was to read all they had to say about these particular forms of religion. Unable to be as learned as M. Dussaud and Père Lammens, not gifted with the eloquence of Barrès, I must give a summary and uninspired account, but yet it is impossible to leave the Alaouite country without some description of its distinctive inhabitants.

Many of us have at one time or another been struck with the anomaly of that modern man of fashion, H. H. The Aga Khan, whose haunts are Deauville and Monte Carlo and the Ritz Hotel in Paris, being the head of a vast religious sect, being, in fact, the prophet and depository of the mystery of the Assassins. He is "Time and Existence itself" (in Paris he goes by the appellation of *"le propriétaire du Temps"*), he is "Being in its Essence." A visit to him conveys the same blessings as a pilgrimage to Mecca. Once a year he writes a sort of encyclical which is "of faith" and is added to the sacred writings that belong to the Koran.

To him come the Chiefs of the widely dispersed communities which own his religious headship: fierce mountaineers from Syria, white-headed sages from India, Russians and dark-eyed Afghans, to bring him bags of gold and silver, the tithes of their earnings and incomes that every member of the sect is bound to devote to his use. Along the corridors of the Ritz Hotel their voices may be heard raised in their ritual prayers, and through a half-opened door they may be seen, turned towards Mecca genuflecting on a carpet and bowing their heads to the ground. One has often been tempted to wonder about them, but I confess that it was not till my eyes saw the scarred and fissured mountains to the southeast of Latakia where their sect originated, that I really felt like taking the trouble to find out what they actually were. These mountains, called the Ansariyeh range, bounding the Alaouite plain, and more or less prolonging the Lebanon chain, rich in water and cut with deep hidden ravines, have offered from earliest times a secure asylum against the invasions that swept over the fertile plains of the coast; and still, in our times, communities are existing there, ethnically distinct, each from its neighbours, practising religions whose sacred rites are only thinly veiled by a superficial adherence to the doctrine of Mahomet. The chief sects that hide in these mountain gorges or on their almost inaccessible

rock-peaks are the Ismaelis (Isma'ilîyeh) or Assassins, the Nosairis (Nosayrîyeh) or Ansariyehs, and the Metawilehs.

The name Assassins (Hashishin) comes from Hashish, the opiate derived from the hemp, and was applied to a branch of the Shiite sect known as Ismaelis, who venerated Ismael, the descendant of Ali, to whom they believe his ancestor's power had descended in an uninterrupted line, their present head, the Aga Khan, being the forty-seventh Imam in a direct line from Ali. Hassan Sabbat at the end of the eleventh century was its first leader of note. Hassan was in Egypt in 1078-9, but he became involved in court squabbles and went away to Aleppo and Damascus, finally settling in Kohistan. From there he spread his heresy and organized his followers into a secret society whose beliefs seem to have been a dreadful mixture of magism, Judaism, Mahometanism, Christianity, Greek Philosophy, Gnosticism, and God-knows-what. They had only one clear disciplinary rule—blind obedience to the orders of the chief.

In 1090 they got possession of the strong mountain fortress of Alamut, south of the Caspian Sea, and then their leader, Hassan Sabbat, initiated his practice of secretly assassinating his enemies, first making his emissaries drunk with hashish. They were carried unconscious into a beautiful

secret garden to taste the joys of paradise in the arms of houris and to be told that this was only a foretaste of the joys that awaited them in the next world if they were obedient to the command of their overlord. Again drugged, they were carried out of the garden of delights and awoke ready to carry out any mission, however cruel or dangerous, in the hope of gaining such a heaven. They were sent as secret agents to all the courts, and as they imitated the current dress and religion and habits no one could tell, till the fatal dagger struck him or he drank of the poisoned cup, whether he numbered an Assassin among his retainers or not. A little later the Assassins gained a stronghold in Syria near Hama and spread terror around by swift unexpected murders. Hassan Sabbat's successor was Berzuh Omid; his godson, who succeeded him, appointed one Sinan (a Nosairian) as the chief of the Syrian Ismaelian communities. Sinan took up his dwelling in the Ansariyeh mountains, and was the original "Old Man of the Mountains," although the name was apparently first applied to a later ruler. He gave himself out as a new Incarnation of the Divinity of the Stars, who had already been incarnated in Aaron, Jesus and Ali. This Sinan was in his youth an intimate friend of Omar Khayyám.

A second Hassan, who became their Grand Master in 1164, made the pleasing announcement

that the doctrines of Islam were abolished and that the people should give themselves up to feasting and enjoyment, an innovation that became at once popular! Soon after, he proclaimed himself to be the promised Iman, Caliph of God on earth. This, however, did not preserve him from falling victim to the practice he inculcated on his followers: his brother-in-law assassinated him, and was in his turn, along with all his family and relations, assassinated by Mahomet II, Hassan's son and successor. This Mahomet's long rule of nearly half a century was marked by cruelty. He fought the Sultan Noureddin, and Saladin himself, and slew the Crusading knights, Raymond of Tripoli and Conrad of Montferrat. He was the chief who was first actually called "the Old Man of the Mountains." His use of poison, knife and cord grew finally so scandalous that at last Beybars, the Egyptian conqueror, in 1260 sent a strong force against him and nearly extirpated the whole sect. Only a small body still exists in the Syrian mountains, and Bombay has become the headquarters, the Indian Ismaelis being the main source of the vast income which the Aga Khan so gaily spends in fashionable European resorts. Ismaelis are also to be found in Russia and Afghanistan, and there is a small body of them in South Africa.

NOSAIRIS OR ANSARIYEHS

At the same time that Beybars destroyed the Assassins, he tried to convert their hereditary enemies and neighbours, the Nosairis, but they would not enter the mosques he built. They held to their secret cult and maintained a guerrilla fight with the Ismaelis until in 1832 Ibrahim Pasha could stand it no longer, and made a violent end of the disorders, ruining the Nosairi castles and beheading many of their chiefs.

However, they were by no means extirpated, and by 1847 the Nosairis were strong enough to upset the Ottoman government and to establish a republic of their own at Latakia, while from 1854-8 a miniature Nosairi monarch, Ismael Bey, from headquarters at Safita, forced the Government at Constantinople to accept him. After his death the Ottomans took possession of and misruled the whole country. During the last war they, along with the other Alaouites, refused to pay the Turkish taxes or to submit to conscription. At the end of the war they came more or less under the French mandate, but were so discontented and gave so much trouble that in 1925 the Alaouites were formed into a semi-independent state, and the arrangement works fairly well. They are characterized by Lieutenant Jacquot as "an old race to which the Phoenicians imparted their religion,

which Christianity and Islam lightly brushed, and which has kept during all these centuries its own local life and the impress of its ancient cults and its love of independence." They do not enjoy a very good repute among those outside their sect. The Reverend Dr. W. M. Thomson writes of them as "the most ignorant, debased and treacherous race in the country. Their religion is a profound secret, but is believed to be more infamous than even their external morals." Van Berchem speaks more kindly of them—"they recall the Druses of the Hauran, a handsome race, strong as well as fine, gentle as well as proud: but without that air of nobility and the somewhat haughty bearing which make of the Druses a finished type of the *grand seigneur.*"

It was in fact, this secret religion of the Nosairis, not their political history, that excited my imagination as we drove along the coast and looked up into the dark crevasses and ravines that lead to their fastnesses, the "chaotic combination of reason, of mysticism, of fanaticism, of secrecy, of magic," as Mr. Lukach describes it, or as a traveller of seventy-five years ago says, "mysticism heaped on mysticism, till they themselves are puzzled at their own belief." A Syrian whom we met described to us their fortnightly ceremony (on Thursdays, if I remember rightly) at which he had several times been present. The men (women have no souls and

die like animals) assemble in their place of worship and a female figure draped in blue takes her place on a platform before a kind of altar. At a given moment in the ritual of song and prayer she throws off the drapery and stands nude to be worshipped as the symbol of fecundity—perhaps a last vestige of the worship of Astarte. He said that the privilege of this impersonation, if privilege it be, was the prerogative of one family, and the woman chosen for it must be young, though she may be either married or unmarried. Gertrude Bell speaks of another sect whose ritual seems to centre about the boiling of a pot. In fact the second member of the Nosairi "Trinity," the Exterior Manifestation of God, is variously conceived. According to M. Dussaud the Haidaris believe that Mahomet is the Sun, the Essence of God—a survival, surely, of Baal—while the exposition of the Doctrine, Salman el-Faresi (the moon), is the Manifestation of God designed to explain the tenets of the faith. The Shamalis, who seem to incorporate in their beliefs much that belonged to the ancient Syrian cults, look on Ali as the sky, whose chief dwelling is the Sun, represented by his father-in-law, Mahomet. They hold that the angel Gabriel made a mistake in bringing the revelation of the true religion to Mahomet, as it was really intended for Ali. Taboos older than the Koran or the Bible even are perpetuated in

their prohibition against eating the flesh of camels and of hares; eels also are forbidden food, as well as pork which Mahomet forbade, and the fish of the Orontes which was forbidden by Salman. The Ghaibis, a small distinct sect, adore the air, while the Kalazis lean rather to the old worship of the Moon, Ali Mahomet and Salman (the last of the seven incarnations of the Trinity) representing the sky, the sun, and the moon—the old Syro-Phoenician gods.

All the Nosairi sects tend to believe that the stars were the original abode of the faithful Unitarians and that the sojourn of the human being upon the earth is due to their fall, an event in which they alone among Mahometans believe. Metempsychosis is also part of their belief, those who have done wrong in their lives returning as animals. They all recognize as Divine Manifestations Moses, Solomon, Jesus, Mahomet and Salman el-Faresi, who appeared as the Baptist in the time of Christ. They celebrate Mahometan and even Christian feasts, such as Christmas, Epiphany, Palm and Easter Sundays, Pentecost, the Feasts of St. Barbara, St. John Chrysostom, St. Catherine, etc.

Like all the people of these lands, either now or in the past, they worship on "high places," where they set up "bethels," or conical stones,[9] such as the Emperor Elagabalus transplanted from Emesa

to Rome, and which have been worshipped from the dawn of history. In the time of the Phoenicians these stones represented Astarte, the principle of fecundity, and her love, Adonis, the principle of reproduction whom she rescued from death by herself descending into Hades, was worshipped in the form of a sacred pole, while priests and consecrated prostitutes were attached to their sanctuaries and a perpetual fire was kept alight. Human sacrifices, which it seems the Phoenicians borrowed from the Canaanites, have, I think, gone out. Along with these bethels, related objects such as mountains and sacred pools and fishes are still adored, and they pay great reverence to an intermittent spring not far from Horus which was one of the most frequented of Phoenician sanctuaries. This was called the "Sabbatic Fountain" since Josephus wrote that its waters flowed every seventh day.

This tendency to worship in high places and in groves has fascinated me since I first read about it in the Old Testament. It was a practice the Israelites were continually relapsing into, and it seemed to arouse the special anger of Jehovah. It meant of course their forsaking the monotheism he stood for and adopting the current gods of the countries they conquered. All the same, to a little Quaker child, accustomed to sit through long hours of silent worship in a barn-like "meeting house," it did seem somehow very attractive to worship in

groves on hills, and the spice of wickedness attached to it certainly did not diminish the fascination. True, it provoked the Lord to anger, but perhaps that was only against his Chosen People, and I did not feel sure he would punish a Quaker as he threatened to punish the Israelites. Whenever my father read to us from the Old Testament (I Kings 14) how the Lord threatened to smite Israel "as a reed is shaken in the water . . . because they have made their groves" I felt a shiver that was somehow delightful. "And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins. . . . For they . . . built them high places and images and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree. . . . And they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the Children of Israel."

Evidently this fascination which I dimly felt is still potent among the inhabitants of Syria. The Reverend W. M. Thomson says:

Every conspicuous hilltop has a *willy* or *mazar,* beneath a spreading oak, to which people pay religious visits, and thither they go up to worship and to discharge vows. All sects in the country without exception, have a predilection for these "high places," strong as that of the Jews in ancient times. The most pious and zealous kings could not remove the high places from Israel; and most of them not only con-

nived at but shared in the superstition and frequented these shrines. They were generally surrounded by a grove or had at least one or more shady trees planted near them, and so they have today. The customs are identical. . . . Many of these *mazars,* whose history no one knows, have probably come down from remote antiquity, through all the mutations of dynasties and religions, unchanged to the present hour. We can believe this the more readily, because they are now frequented by the oldest communities in the country, and those most opposed to each other. . . . We have, therefore, in these places not only sites of the very highest antiquity, but living examples and monuments of men's most ancient superstitions; and if this does not add to our veneration, it will much increase the interest with which we examine them. If it does not soften our condemnation, it may at least lessen our surprise.

METAWIYEHS

Before leaving these mysterious mountains, I must mention briefly the third sect of Moslem heretics who live in the Lebanon. They are called Metawiyehs, and are also Shi'ites, or followers of Ali, and probably entered the country during one of the Persian invasions. They maintain a close connection with the shrine of Kerbela, especially sacred to the Persians, and they always carry with them small cakes of earth from the site of the murder of Husein to touch with their foreheads when they bow in prayer. They rule their lives in accordance with Shiah civil law. Less mystical than

the other sects, they are stricter in their religious observances, and they shun all contact with outsiders, regarding infidels as being so "impure" that they will not take food or drink with them, nor even food prepared by them, breaking any cups or plates used by them. And of course they only marry among themselves. Although there are about thirty thousand in the Lebanon and another twenty-five thousand scattered through Syria, it is hard to find out much about them, so shut up in themselves are they. Their villages and persons are dirty, their culture is low even for the East, and they are the most insoluble element of all the unamalgamated races that make of Syria such a difficult problem for her new rulers. They live, as the Reverend W. M. Thomson said, "separated both in fact and feeling, from their neighbours—hating all, hated by all. . . ." De Vogüé echoes this opinion in the following words: " . . . *Impénétrables et rebelles . . . sauvages fanatiques . . . sans être apparentés à aucune des populations* [*autour d'eux*] *. . . on sait bien peu de choses de cette famille curieuse.*"

CHAPTER XII

TRIPOLI TO BEIRUT

WE probably made a great mistake in not going to see the famous Cedars of Lebanon, but our journey was drawing so near to its end, it was so hot, and we were so tired that we felt we must have a few days in the high air of Baalbec (not to mention the Ruins), and so we did not make this excursion. As a matter of fact a good many people had told us that the grove was no longer very remarkable, most of the big trees having died, and what remained having been fenced in in a very prosaic way. So, perhaps mistakenly, we gave up the expedition and hurried on to Beirut to get our letters and make a start from there for Baalbec.

BYBLOS

In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn. —MILTON

We drove along a lovely road recalling that between Ravello and Amalfi. About eleven we reached Byblos,[1] where excavations are being vigorously pursued. It is now called Jebel, a name reminiscent of the pre-Greek Gebal, whose inhab-

itants are mentioned in the Old Testament as "hewers of stone" (I Kings 5: 18) and as skilled in shipbuilding (Ezekial 27: 9). According to its best known citizen, Philo, it was one of the most ancient places in the world, having been founded by Ba'al Kronos himself. Here the cult of Adonis had its chief seat, and Philo, who professed to have drawn his information from an old Phoenician writer, Sanchuniathan, narrates the following myth: "El, the supreme god, wanders over the earth, and leaves Byblos to his wife, Ba'altis. Eliun (Adonis) becomes her lover and is killed by El, or, according to another version by a wild boar." The mourning for the slain Adonis was one of the principal religious ceremonies of Byblos, and far-famed orgies were connected with this cult. Astarte-Ba'altis is the goddess of fertility, and with her lover represents death in nature and resurrection due to reproduction. The cult harks back to Istar and Thammuz in Mesopotamia, and gave rise to the Greek myth of Venus and Adonis.

If Ba'al Kronos really founded Byblos, he had a good eye for a site, for it is one of the loveliest on the whole coast, a promontory half shutting in a small deep bay. Here the Greeks erected a temple, some of whose graceful columns are still standing. I sat (for it was terribly hot, and I was lazy) and looked out to the sea between them, while

the others, in the blazing sunlight, did some fierce archaeologizing. After a time even I got interested in the deep Egyptian-like tombs they were uncovering and in the marble sarcophagi that were being brought up. The tombs had all been rifled, alas! in past times, but some pottery and coins and a few statues were still being found, of which the most interesting had already been despatched to the Beirut Museum. Several crude Egyptian colossi topped the trenches, looking massive and imposing from a distance.

In the little town itself there was not very much to see except the baptistery clinging to the wall of a Jacobite church, the lofty arches of which are enriched with exquisitely varied chevron mouldings.

We had our lunch beside the Stream of Adonis, sitting under the shade of some large walnuts. At the head of the valley was the ancient Apheca, the site of the famous temple of Venus, destroyed by Constantine on account of the orgiastic rites that were celebrated there. Here, as indeed all over Syria, is exemplified the invariable law that a holy place remains sacred through all the changes and permutations of cult. Venus took the place of Aschera, Adonis of Thammuz, but Apheca and the red river were no less thronged with worshippers. Sometimes the river runs red, and this is supposed to be the blood of Adonis. The water was a muddy

red when we saw it, and it rushed down to the sea with great violence, staining the water a long way out until it finally melted into the blue. Lucian thus speaks of it in his *De Dea Syria,*[2] our most important authority on the native religions of Syria in Roman times:

There is another marvel in the territory of Byblus; a river flows from Mount Lebanon to the sea: the name given to the river is Adonis. Now the river turns to blood every year, and after losing its ordinary colour flows into the sea and reddens much of the waves and gives a signal to the Byblians for their laments. Now they tell how on these days Adonis is wounded at Lebanon, and that his blood, passing into the water, transforms the river and gives its name to the stream. This is the story of the common people. But a certain man of Byblus, who seemed to speak truthfully, told me of another cause of the phenomenon. He said as follows: "My friend, the river Adonis goes through Lebanon; now Lebanon has a very yellow soil. Therefore violent winds springing up on those days bring down the earth, and the earth renders it red like blood. The cause of the appearance is not the blood which they speak of, but the soil." This was the story that the Byblian told me, but, even if he spoke the truth in this, the coincidence of the wind seems to me surely divinely appointed. [One can almost hear the voice of a pious sectary of the "Higher Criticism."]

The little wayside inn above the Adonis was so attractive, with its airy rooms and clean beds, where we had our siesta, that we instantly planned to re-

turn and spend a month in this delightful place—ah, when?

DOG RIVER

Tea on this day was drunk on a spur of the Lebanon which thrusts itself forward into the sea a few miles north of Beirut. Sitting beside the rock-carved inscriptions that line the ancient road to the Dog River, our eyes could follow all the grand sweep of the mountain range to where it dipped its last northern promontory in the sea. Along the track of the road, where we sat on an upturned Roman paving-stone, there passed for three thousand years the great armies of antiquity on the march to conquer Syria, and they left rock carvings to commemorate their passage. There are half-effaced but unmistakable Egyptian figures with their heads and legs in profile and their bodies presented frontally, and a cuneiform of the twelfth century B.C. records the march of Nebuchadnezzar. De Vogüé thus writes of the place:

> You climb a narrow path along a ledge cut in the rock, with a gaping pavement of antique blocks, disjointed and broken. It is the remains of the Roman Road, which itself followed a still more ancient route, the route of the invasion, where the Asiatic armies came to repose themselves from their fatigue in the sunshine of this level seashore, which exercised the same fascination upon them that the Italian valleys exercised on the barbarian hordes of the Middle Ages.

The whole of armed antiquity has passed this way, as is attested by the archives of this strange road preserved in the rocks along which its way was cut: carved tablets one beside another in the stone wall contain the remains of inscriptions in all languages and the emblems of all the conquerors who rested in the valley of *Nahr-el-Kelb* between two battles. As travellers write their names in a hotel book, so these terrible tourists had the whim to inscribe their names on the rocks. First one sees the most ancient masters of the world, the Pharaohs before the time of Moses, already conquerors of old Phoenicia: the cartouches of the Thotmes and the Rameses are still visible, though worn by being rubbed by passing camels for thirty or forty centuries; then the Assyrian conquerors coming from the Euphrates, the Tiglath-Pilesers and Nebuchadnezzars, hieratic figures recognizable by the mitre and the long robe of the Kings of Nineveh. After them came the Romans with pompous inscriptions; Marcus Aurelius, the sage, speaks from a stone in the midst of his soldiers. The first Arab Caliphs have signed their names in their old Kufic writing on this memorable page; finally, an inscription dated 1860 recalls the passage of the French army, which, as a contrast, came in the cause of civilization and justice.

Then, it was to protect the Christians from massacre, but the French had passed that way before on a less pacific mission, as a marble tablet set into the rock by Napoleon records.

The Dog River itself, bridged since the earliest times, was known to the Greeks as the Wolf River (Lykos), taking its name from a colossal stone dog,

or wolf, that used to stand on a cliff in the sea at the river's mouth, and was supposed to bark at the approach of an enemy, and to deliver oracles in a loud voice that could be heard as far as Cyprus. What would not one give to see—and hear—the creature!

Down by the river was a little settlement of simple summer hotels and restaurants, and there were some cages in which wild animals were miserably confined. A mangy eagle chained by the leg excited our compassion. Tables were spread along the banks of the stream, giving on a romantic view of a fern-hung dripping aqueduct on the other side. We crossed the bridge and walked along it for a short distance up the narrow green valley cutting into the Lebanon rocks, and longed to have a whole day to explore further the hidden beauties of the gorge. But the idea of Beirut, with letters and friends, incited us to get there at least in time for dinner.

CHAPTER XIII

BAALBEC

"The ruins of Baalbec!" Shall I scatter the vague, solemn thoughts, and all the airy phantasies which gather together when once these words are spoken, that I may give you instead, tall columns, and measurements true, and phrases built in ink? No, no; the glorious sounds shall still float as of yore, and still hold fast upon your brain with their own dim, and infinite meaning. —*Eothen*

THE BE'KA

THE next morning we motored to the home of our dragoman, at Beitshebab, and had the interesting lunch there that I have already described. In the afternoon we crossed the pass over the Lebanon, through endless varieties of bent and twisted rocks, an intricate and fascinating geological jumble, the playground of primeval giants.[1] After crossing the pass we entered a very different civilization. The gay, red-roofed, prosperous Maronite villages of the Western Lebanon were replaced on the eastern side by villages of mud and rubble, seldom more than one storey in height, poor, broken-down, dirty. But (like all unspoiled

human things in the real East) how they harmonize with the landscape! The pass led to the valley between the two ranges, Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, which for long had fascinated us with the earth wrinkle that sinks so deep between them in Coelesyria (Baká, *Be'ka*) and continues deeper still in the Jordan and Dead Sea valleys, but here the whole thing, valley and enclosing mountains, has been lifted up some six thousand feet, so that Baalbec, at almost the highest point in the valley, is nearly four thousand feet above sea level, while the mountains that hem in the valley rise to ten thousand feet at their highest, with snow-crowned Hermon crouching over the southeastern and Sunnin keeping guard at the northwestern end of the vale, both nine thousand feet in height. A few miles to the north of Baalbec is the watershed between the Orontes, running north to Hama and then east to Antioch, and the Leontes, or Litany as it is now called, which cuts through the Lebanon range and empties into the sea near Tripoli. The undulating valley of Coelesyria is from four to six miles broad and over it rush endless streams and brooks from the snowy heights on each side. In other than shiftless Bedouin hands, it would be one of the most fertile plains of the earth, as indeed it was in antiquity, or as its sister plain near Murcia now is. But these worse than gypsy nomads let the streams wander where they will to lose themselves

fruitlessly in the open, never repairing the ancient channels and aqueducts, sitting all day in their verminous black tents, or in front of their shoddy cafés, playing dice and smoking and drinking endless cups of coffee. Only the shepherds work, and their work is chiefly to sit and play on pipes and watch their sheep and goats and cattle feed. They have cut down most of the trees—though the few they have left make a deeper impression of TREE than any forest could give!—and of course they never replant. An intelligent doctor whom we met at Baalbec told us that the crops they contrive to sow give only about one fifth of the return they could give if they were properly managed.

BAALBEC

As we raced along this valley, perhaps all the more beautiful for the neglect it suffers, eager to catch a glimpse of Baalbec before dusk, the sun was sinking behind the Lebanon in unimaginable splendour, now veiling his flaming countenance as behind a screen of jewels and now looking out at us between mountain crags like a king from his palace window. But he bid for our worship in vain; we could not stop until our goal was reached, for we had seen, from a great distance, rising high above the plain, the columns of Baalbec, their colossal proportions making them seem much nearer than they really were. We did arrive at last and

there was still light enough for us to have our first glimpse of the ruins, while our luggage was being unpacked at the quiet and pleasant hotel of Kaouan, situated on a pine-clad hill just outside the town. There are two entrances to the Acropolis, but we were let in by the modern steps—presented by the Emperor William II, and as hideous as all the dreadful buildings he gave to the Near East, such as the huge castle on the Mount of Olives or the vulgar kiosk on the site of the Hippodrome at Constantinople. These steps lead up, *tant bien que mal,* to the front wall of the Acropolis which stands on a platform composed of vast monolithic blocks of golden coloured stone, by their size and cut suggesting an origin pre-Greek, perhaps Phoenician. A stream or moat lies at the base mirroring them, and a little garden of fruit-trees, walnuts, willows and poplars, surrounds the whole site. On the platform stand some grand columns, forming a porch outside the great carved doorways which lead to the first court, an enclosure half as large again as the quadrangle of Christ Church, Oxford. We hurried through this, not stopping to see the beautiful niched walls that surround it nor the basins with their delicate bas-reliefs, for we were wild to catch a sunset glimpse of the high-standing stately columns of the Temple of the Sun and the colonnaded walls of the Temple of Bacchus.

It was only a glimpse, but the next morning we

were there with a guide and guide-books, with field glasses, dark spectacles, umbrellas, and shawls to sit on—all the tourist's paraphernalia. In the course of the morning we had the pleasure of meeting M. Michel Alouf, the guardian of the Acropolis, who kindly gave us a few explanations, and we possessed ourselves of his Guide,[2] which is a model of what such a book should be, clear, brief but complete, learned, well arranged. M. Alouf assisted the German excavators and restorers from 1898 to 1905, and his information can be relied upon. This book is all that is needed by the non-specialist visitor. Afterwards, if one's interest holds, one can gorge oneself to repletion on the four big volumes of the German Expedition,[3] with their wealth of photographic reproductions, ground plans, elevations and explanatory texts. These volumes contain all that is known up to the present about Baalbec, the ancient Heliopolis, but I refer to the light portable book of M. Alouf anyone who may want to read on the spot about the ancient Phoenician cult of Baal—the Lord of thunder and originator of iron—and his translation by the Romans into Jupiter Dolichenus; about the worship at Baalbec of Venus, as offerings to whom, under the name of Atargatis, children used to be hurled down from the propylaeon; or about the temples of Mercury and Bacchus and all the shrines dedicated to other members of the Greek pantheon who had their

niches round the great court; and also about the Christian church built in the temple by Theodosius, and the conquest of the place by the Arabs who converted the Acropolis into a fortress; and Hulugu and Tamerlane, who successively conquered it, destroying as they came; and to the same source I recall all those who like working out ancient plans step by step. But for once I will allow myself the luxury of sticking to my aesthetic impression, for I am beginning to be a bit sick of this unending trail of Phoenicians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Mongols, Crusaders, Turks and all the rest, that dog one's steps on such a trip as this. To reinterest myself or my reader, would require by now detailed special information from original sources, or from writers who have drawn from original sources and are real authorities. These pale ghosts floating in on mists of general information have grown too thin. I want figures more solid, outlines more definite, information more accurate and detailed. And anyone who has read me thus far with any spark of interest will feel the same. We shall go and bury ourselves in "real" learning and never come to the end.

On our second evening M. Alouf took us to view the ruins by moonlight. This time we entered by the long covered gallery that runs below at the side of the platform on which the Acropolis

stands. It gives on the narrow space that lies between the Temple of the Sun and the somewhat lower Temple of Bacchus. The moment of emergence from the gloom of the corridor into the light of the full moon, with those six colossal columns, no less beautiful than stupendous, rising from the platform above us and tinted in that silver glow with a delicate, almost transparent mauve hue, will always remain as one of the most blissful visual experiences of our lives. Nothing on earth can be more impressive, more poetical. To have gained such a treasure for one's memory would repay almost any fatigue or discomfort.

I am tempted to end my book on this high but I fear utterly uncommunicable note of ecstasy.

But the pettifogging technique of the writer of travels has imposed itself upon me, and it is more than I can do to break off before I have brought the trip to its material end. What I can and will do in honour of that supreme experience is to refrain from those historical and archaeological details which are to be found in M. Alouf's book (and even in Baedeker) so instructively set forth. This time the sheer beauty of it all, this "ecstasy of Corinthian architecture" as it has been called, certainly killed the archaeologist in me, and whenever I returned to the ruins it was only to the lust of the eyes that I devoted my energies. My husband of course explored every corner, looked at every

fallen stone, and noted every sign in the figures in the fallen blocks of the ceilings that showed the degeneration of "late Roman" sculpture and anticipated the beginning of "Romanesque," as it is his present hobby to attempt to bridge the gap between the two, or rather, to prove that there was, in fact, no break in continuity. He, too, worshipped at the shrine of Beauty, but not so long or so uninterruptedly as I did, when I sat time and again on one of the roofed terraces overlooking the luscious garden of figs, apricots, pears, spreading walnuts and trembling poplars, looking north along the Be'ka stretching up to the watershed between the Litany and the Orontes which washes the banks whereon Antioch once stood. In these gardens the walnut trees attain a height and girth and give a shade surpassing anything we have ever seen except the giant plane trees and acacias at Constantinople and that sacred cedar that shelters flocks of sheep in a field between Athens and Kephissia.

Over the trees to the east and west I could see the great barriers of the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon, the latter turning to the plain its richly folded southern slopes, bare of snow, the former displaying with snow-markings in the shaded ravines of its precipitous northern wall of rocks some vast undecipherable inscription that looked as if written in gigantic Cufic characters. Human intelligence cannot read that cosmic message, but

other human faculties become aware of a part at least of its meaning.

HELBUN

But all this is not the business of the chronicler, and I have it on my mind to recount our day's excursion to Helbun. It was about two hours' motor drive from Baalbec to Helbun, the ancient Chalybus, famed already in the time of Nebuchadnezzar for its vintages, which the Kings of Persia, importing them, deemed their choicest wines. We crossed the divide between the Litany and the Orontes after a few miles and then followed for a long time the course of the ancient channels and aqueducts that once carried the water all the way to Palmyra. The stream gushed out from a low rock on the plain, forming at once a clear green pool which discharged its rippling waters into a stone channel. Henceforward it ran on in its bed, but in places where the land sank away it was carried level by leaking mossy aqueducts. Later, the channel turned the flank of the Anti-Lebanon and was conducted underground through the desert to Palmyra. We had in fact traced the best part of its ancient course in its dry bed when we motored from Palmyra to Homs. But naturally long before our time the careless Bedouin had let the channels and aqueducts fall into disrepair and the stream now wastes itself on the plain. A writer who knew

the Arabs well has said, "Arab *civilization* is a mere deception. It is but the last gleam of Greek and Roman civilization, gradually dying out in the powerless but respectful hand of Islam."

But we had lost sight of the aqueduct before we were in the sacred valley of the Orontes, which springs out of a rock in the east side of the Lebanon range. This source, we were told, was one of the most fascinating sights in Syria, the water (it would appear) splashing down in a full stream into a marble basin overhung with great trees. It was indeed to see *this,* and not the pleasant but uninteresting little town of Helbun, that we had set out—but, lo, we spent several dull hours in the town until it was too late to visit the source of the river. We are not yet clear as to how this happened. There were many brigands living in filthy splendour hidden in the nearby mountains, and one of their strongholds was the old monastery just above the source, and it may be that our dragoman was warned at Helbun that the visit was unsafe. So we remained far too long for our pleasure sitting on divans around the reception room of the great Sheik of the district, whose palace was approached, as usual, by a courtyard filthy beyond the Western imagination. Here we sat and smoked, exchanging nearly unintelligible compliments, both sides smiling with goodwill and politeness. Presently it became clear to us that a sheep

was being killed in our honour and that we were expected to partake of it at the feast that was preparing. Somehow our dragoman got us out of this, and we were allowed (the rain, alas, preventing our picnicking beside the Orontes which we had crossed a mile or two back) to eat our hard-boiled eggs and sardines and fruit in a quiet airy room, sitting on real chairs, and using knives and forks, instead of crouching on the ground and snatching with our fingers, to fold into plates composed of big flour pancakes, bits of mutton from the common pot, tasting of the awful mutton fat it makes us sick even to think of, and washing our food down with wine poured straight from the jug into our mouths, being expected to grunt after each swallow to express polite approval of the fare. This ritual we were lucky to escape, and we rested peacefully while all the others were dismembering the festal sheep. It was when their meal was over that we discovered it was too late to get to the source of the Orontes, but as we heard afterwards that all the trees around the basin had been cut down to provide the brigands with firewood, we were somewhat consoled for our loss.

ORONTES

We felt indeed that it could scarcely have been more beautiful than what we had seen, the young river a few miles from its source winding its

sparkling way through the low hills and creating oases of verdure wherever the hills retreated enough to allow small valleys to be formed. These valleys are rare, for this alluring river in its course through the Be'ka to the plain of Homs, some two thousand feet below, where it widens into a lake, bores its hidden way through rocky gorges. After singing in the waterwheels of Hama and fertilizing that rich plain, it is turned sharply to the west by a barrier of rock and flows into the opening valley of Antioch, where, in the lake some miles above the town, it is joined by two tributaries from the northern mountains. It then plunges again into another gorge and rushes down to the sea through a vale as lovely as the Vale of Tempe, accomplishing a total course of a hundred and seventy miles, during which in ancient times it companioned all the armies and caravans of merchants that passed from north to south to and from Egypt.

MONUMENT OF HERMEL

We were rewarded for missing our glimpse of the actual first beginnings by having plenty of time to examine the curious stone monument that stands on a lonely hill, the other side of the river. This mysterious landmark has a base of three layers of coarse limestone rocks, retreating like steps. It is divided into three storeys: the first is a solid cube of masonry twenty-nine and a half feet broad at

each side and twenty-six feet high, with pilasters at the corners, and bas-reliefs under the cornice that divided it from a somewhat smaller second storey decorated with two pilasters on each face as well as those at the corners. The third storey is a pyramid of forty layers of stone reaching to about eighty feet. In shape it vaguely recalls the mysterious "Tomb of Absalom" in the Valley of Jehoshaphat at Jerusalem. The bas-reliefs represent emblems of the chase and hunting scenes—stags standing and lying down, a wild boar attacked by dogs, and so on. This monument was drawn by Porter in his *Five Years in Damascus* and at that time, 1885, it was intact. Now one side has fallen down and the others show cracks. It will probably soon be a shapeless heap of stones. Yet it is a monument well worth preserving, at any rate until it can be ascertained what it was and who put it up. Local tradition calls it the tomb of a Roman Emperor, but the reliefs look like the tile tigers from Susa (in the Louvre), and the moulding is perhaps Greco-Phoenician—all in all, it is a complete mystery.

Again sunset found us on the road enjoying the flush that lighted the bare furrowed flanks of the Anti-Lebanon range, and the deep violet shadows that crept over the valley from the Lebanon.

NIHA

One other excursion we made to the tiny Christian village of Niha, hidden in a fissure in the Lebanon, about thirty miles south of Baalbec. Here were some colossal basalt ruins of a Phoenician temple once dedicated to a god called Hardardanes, in whose honour the "Virgin of Niha" abstained from bread for twenty years. Returning to Baalbec at sunset, we saw the antlike human activities of the plain, from which cattle were straggling up to the safety of hill-villages for the night, and where in the slanting rays long-robed Bedouins were driving their donkeys and camels, laden with fodder or grain, or themselves riding along on who knows what antlike mission, their shawls floating in the evening breeze.

BAALBEC

Again the ruins, of which it seems one could never tire! Their aspect changes from hour to hour, and we were always discovering new details to interest us, and new romantic points of view from the walls. We had fortunately the leisure—for we stayed at Baalbec a week—to see the monument in every possible light, a privilege not enjoyed by the majority of travellers, who see it but once and then hurry on. Little by little plenty of archaeology found its way into our beauty-

stricken souls—but all this I have vowed to keep to myself in this place, the Holy of Holies of the shrine of beauty.

I will only mention our visit to the quarries, where a monolith of Egyptian vastness lies abandoned * beneath a hill from whose crest a view of all the town and the ruins can be seen—Baalbec and the Be'ka and its enclosing mountains, and the lovely little Be'ka created by a low limestone ridge that shoots out above the town, narrowing the big valley to make room for the Beka's offspring that lies at its side. There was also the spring, *Ras el-Ain,* near which our hotel stood, bubbling from the rock and spreading itself out in an antique marble basin containing a grassy island shaded by walnuts and poplars and willows. Here the natives of Baalbec come on warm afternoons to sit on the grass and drink tea and enjoy the sweet and unobtrusive companionship of the water and the rustling coolness of the overhanging trees which distil through their shadows the ardent sun in flickering drops of brightness. I must not forget, either, the old mosque,[4] deserted, tumbling to ruin

* Seventy feet long by fifteen in height and breadth. It would take 46,000 men to move it! The somewhat smaller monoliths of the enclosing wall built round the three sides of the Temple of Jupiter (sixty feet by fourteen by eleven), which are raised to a height of twenty-five feet, set exactly square in their place, with joints so accurate that it is impossible to insert the blade of a knife between them, have enough stone in them to construct a house sixty feet in frontage and in depth and forty feet high, with walls one foot in thickness.

where the fine antique columns stand deep in the grain field that was once its floor, poppy-starred and variegated with cornflowers. Nor the Temple of Venus,[5] near the Acropolis, its curved architrave borne by delicate Corinthian pilasters, with concave walls between the columns so strangely rococo in effect. When the worship of Venus fell into disrepute, this lovely little building was turned into a Greek chapel and dedicated to St. Barbara. Today it is, alas! falling into ruin. Funds are indeed urgently needed to preserve not only this building but even the great columns of the Temple of the Sun themselves, for they are being seriously eaten into by weather and time.

LAST DAY AT BEIRUT

Our week in the cool high air at Baalbec refreshed us, so that our last day in hot Beirut was not oppressive, although we left the Be'ka in a scirocco fierce as a dragon's breath, which lasted until, crossing the pass of the Lebanon, it was opposed and conquered by the vital air from the sea piling up the heavy clouds into a sullen bank at our backs.

We visited again the American College and had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Dodge, the President, and his charming wife and of seeing their beautiful children. We visited the interesting and admirably arranged museum of the College. I found time,

even, to give a little talk to some of the girl students.

Among the young women was the first woman doctor graduate. In Syria female dentists are not uncommon, and there are even female lawyers, so one may suppose that things are on the move even among the women—the Christian women, of course. But I confess that the physical aspect of these students discouraged me about their future. Perhaps my standards are too Anglo-Saxon, but I could not think anything very brilliant or capable in the way of careers lay before these girls, undersized, fat and lethargic, of febrile and fragile aspect, with eyes that looked too lustrous and hands that seemed to have no grip. I fear their "education" should begin in babyhood, or prenatally, if they are to amount to anything. But I may be mistaken. Their spirit is high, their determination unshaken and they have splendid help and encouragement at the College.

RECOLLECTIONS OF BEAUTY

Our boat on May 30, again with the genial Jewish captain, took us to Alexandria, where, with endless and vexing passport and other delays and embroilments, we were transshipped to a swift Brindisi steamer.

Again, lying on the deck, with long hours of leisure, my face turned towards our Italian home,

I began, somewhat idly, to wonder why this particular journey had moved me as no other had done. What fascination was there in that little strip of coast between the Taurus mountains and the Red Sea that worked upon me more strangely than any other region, than even Italy, or Greece itself? Italy is at least as beautiful as landscape, and it is no less crammed with historical and romantic associations—even religious ones are not lacking—and fascinating indeed these are. But I felt as if they had not such deep roots in my being as those called up by the Near East. It is true that the very foundation of the culture of people like ourselves is classic; we are taught Latin and Greek, we learn of Athens and Rome, and of the great men who made them famous: and as our teachers construct for us, so we build for ourselves, the habitation or palace of the mind which is the best gift of education, still that edifice keeps always its classical character. We learn that though we are the heirs of Greece and the grandchildren of Rome, we are essentially in spirit children of the Italian Renaissance. Our imaginations are enriched not only by classic literature and art, but by the images derived from Italian painting and sculpture. The names of great Italians awaken in our souls rich echoes and reverberations, and we make heroes and heroines of Frederick of Hohenstaufen, of Dante and Beatrice, and the rest.

But beneath all the dreams and associations we derive from our more mature culture, there persists a core of still earlier impressions almost forgotten, yet when called up more profound and moving. Long before most of us—I speak for Protestant Anglo-Saxon children of my generation—had heard of Pericles and Pheidias, long before we studied Homer and Virgil, or even had read Dante and Petrarch, or had looked at Italian pictures, our parents at home, or the curate or preacher in church, reading from the Bible, had made the story of Christ and the names of Abraham and Isaac, Moses, David and Solomon familiar to our youthful ears, and old pictures of Biblical scenes, drawn from Bible woodcuts, had awakened in us a childish sense of strangeness and beauty. The vital characters and picturesque scenes of the Old and New Testaments belong to an earlier youth than does the Greek theogony—however much more desirable as beauty that may have come to be for many of us. Parnassus and Hymettus are magical names for us, but even their magic belongs to later years of our development; and no Italian mountain compares with Mount Carmel or Mount Hermon; we knew the Jordan before we had heard of the Tiber.

The reawakening of these earliest memories, the dim emergence of Prophets and Patriarchs from the caves of our youthful wonder, and the echo in

our ears of their awful voices, and the more awful voice of Jehovah from the crags of Sinai or from the mysterious Tabernacle, clothe our impressions of the sacred land with the gravity of the secret thoughts of childhood. And if we are Christians, not even the pitiful farce of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem will utterly repel us. But I was thinking rather of the reactions of the "Modern Pilgrim." The voice of the Son of Man on the Mount of Olives sounded in younger ears than the wisdom of Socrates, the music of the Psalms came before the roll of Homer's verse, and younger feet wandered on the shores of the Lake of Galilee than those which went to Troy, or crossed the Rubicon with Caesar.

Furthermore in Syria and Palestine we are by no means cut off from classical antiquity—certainly one of the most overpowering elements (but only one) in the complicated structure of our House of Life. Syria is full of beautiful Greek buildings, either pure Greek or Greek passed through the medium of Byzantium, and everywhere in both lands the Roman organization and energy is brought to our minds. No one can feel out of touch with Greece and Rome who has come in contact with their children on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean.

And over and beyond, we have in Syria and Palestine that element of the exotic, of the strange-

ness of the East, which is lacking in Italy and Greece. The nomads with their camels and their black tents, the date-trees, the deserts and oases, remind us of Abraham's wanderings, of the Children of Israel in the desert, of the enticing Promised Land; while the bazaars and the palaces with their courtyards and fountains reawaken dreams of childhood—the Arabian Nights, Haroun-al-Raschid, and stories of the Crusaders, whose heroes, like Coeur de Lion and his chivalrous opponent, Saladin, are much greater heroes in our imaginations than any Italian warriors.

Even records of the Middle Ages and beautiful Gothic architecture abound, both in Syria and Palestine: but these, I confess, were less present to my memory at the moment. As those eastern shores dropped more and more into the distance behind our vessel, I felt that I was leaving a land which contained in itself nearly all the elements on which my soul had been nourished. I was indeed almost drowned in the sea of dreams and memories and associations called up by the scenes I was leaving, and I turned before long to simpler themes, to recalling, one by one, the objects of highest beauty (of whatever kind) our eyes had beheld. The corner-stone, so to speak, was certainly Mount Hermon, which holds in its bosom the lovely fountain where the river of Jordan takes its rise, Hermon, whose melting snows form the enchanted

oasis of Damascus, the "Great Sheik" whose white head shows so grandly from the Lake of Galilee or from the Jebel Druse. And then, the greater and lesser Lebanon ranges that enclose the fertile valley of Coelesyria, scarred along the skyline with a giant inscription written in the snows that linger in the crevasses, gleaming at sunset like red jewels against the darker rocks and at noon with them growing insubstantial and transparent. Then there was the Palmyra desert, that changeful mirror of the sky, framed in its embossed hills, over which came the thousands of camels to water at the town's spring. Nor can we forget the ineffable vale of Antioch, the deep winding Orontes and the sparkling streams that rush down from the Lebanon, the broad Euphrates turning silver at sunset, the river dyed with the blood of Adonis, and the stream guarded by the loud-baying dog of stone.

The general impression is of matchless landscape enshrining here and there grand ruins of Phoenician, Hellenistic and mediaeval French character, and mosques and solitary tombs of Moslem saints. Without the landscape, they would lose much of their fascination, although it would still have interested us to find in ancient sculptured friezes, ceilings, and domes obvious links between the dying grimaces of Greek art and the renewed vitality of early mediaeval art. But the incredible

landscape that surrounded our steps from Judea to the Euphrates and from Aleppo to Antioch and the coast, kept us in an ecstasy where every significant ancient stone gave us an excuse for enjoying new panoramas of desert and mountains.

But there were, too, many memorable artistic experiences, such as the mosaics of the great mosque at Damascus, the deserted mosque and medressa of Salamaniyeh, with their courts, and the view of the town and oasis from the hills of Salehiyeh and of the cemetery from the roof of a pavilion at its edge. We had the view of white-domed Maloula leaning against her precipices, and the prospect from the Greek church at the top (I slip back inevitably into landscape!); we saw the black silhouette of Soueida on the Jebel Druse and the grand ruins of Kanawat. Then there was Palmyra, the columns and the great Temple of the Sun, and the Arab castle on the heights above. We saw the dreamlike town of Hama with its lullaby of creaking wheels and its romantic mosque; we saw, not once but many times, the grand citadel of Aleppo, and fed our souls on beauty and pathos in the Firdusi cemetery and its deserted mosques and tombs. The Crusaders' church at Tortosa glows still in memory, and the quiet cemetery mosque at Tripoli. Sahayun and the Crac des Chevaliers—although the work of those dreadful Crusaders!—are monu-

ments I should not willingly forget, nor the outlines of still other fortresses glimpsed among the crags of Lebanon. Among all these sights, beautiful as they were, the "Dead City" of Kalat-Siman comes back as the crown of them all, for site, for completeness, for beauty, for interest.

But over and beyond everything are the mighty records of the time of the Roman Empire, when, owing to the peace that reigned in these countries, Greek artists and architects were able to impress their genius on the conquered land.

Nothing surpasses Palmyra, unless it be Baalbec, and when we think of Jerash and Kanavat, and then of all the later "Dead Cities" of Syria, which still owe their character to Greek inspiration and craftsmanship, we realize that here, more completely than anywhere else on earth, we possess the records of a time when the finest and most beautiful of all forms of art, the Greek, was still a living tradition. Every antique Hellenistic building in Syria, however fragmentary, stands out as the work of giants among mere mortals, whether it be the porch to the Temple of Damascus or the few columns standing in their grace and beauty over the little harbour at Byblos, the Temple of Severus and the columns of the Temple of Bacchus at Latakia, or even the scattered columns and capitals here, there and everywhere, built into the mosques and standing and lying in their courts. The classic

touch is not to be mistaken; it places them on a different level from all other remains of buildings, beautiful as these may be. A finer and more invigorating air stimulates our senses, we realize the greatness and nobility of human achievement.

Thus our trip ended as a material fact, but it began to live again in imagination and reminiscence and speculation. The dirt and heat and hard beds, the noise and glare and the insects, the often dubious food and the hot desert breath that sucked out all our vitality, will be forgotten, but Jerusalem, the Valley of the Jordan, Damascus, Palmyra, Baalbec, Aleppo, Jerash and Antioch, Mount Hermon and the rest will be with us to enrich us till we die. Then—who knows?

NOTES

Chapter I

13 [1] EMILY BEAUFORT, *Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines,* 2 volumes (London, Longmans, 1862). This chatty book while not very illuminating, betrays a great feeling for landscape. The author's description of Beirut is especially vivid (Vol. I, pp. 158-161).

Chapter II

23 [1] LAMARTINE, *Voyage en Orient,* 2 volumes (Paris, Hachette, 1875).

23 [2] A. W. KINGLAKE, *Eothen* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1917—one of the later editions of this classic).

24 [3] REV. W. M. THOMSON, D.D., *The Land and the Book* (London, Nelson, New Edition, 1911). Written in the middle of the last century; a mine of detailed information.

26 [4] E. S. BOUCHIER, *Syria as a Roman Province* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1916), p. 139.

28 [5] THOMSON: see above, note 4.

30 [6] PÈRE HENRI LAMMENS, S. J., *La Syrie: Précis Historique* (Beirut, Imp. Catholique, 1921), notes 8, 38, 63a. Brevity and sound scholarship combined. ———*L'Islam: Croyance et Institutions* (Beirut, Imp. Catholique, 1926).

NOTES

Chapter III

37 [1] PRINCIPAL, THE REVEREND SIR GEORGE ADAM SMITH, D.D., F.R.S., *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1896).

38 [2] G. ELLSWORTH HUNTINGTON, *Palestine and Its Transformation* (London, Constable, 1911).

47 [3] PP. VINCENT and ABEL, *Jérusalem nouvelle* (Paris, Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1914). The most complete account of the Holy Sepulchre, its history and the rites and liturgies in use there. The present edifice is described, the Constantinian structure, the condition of the church between 624 and 1109, the Crusaders' church, as well as all the different rites and liturgies used there.

49 [4] CHATEAUBRIAND'S account of the Holy Sepulchre, which he was almost the last to see before the fire, is very interesting. *Itineraire de Paris et Jérusalem* (Bruxelles, Lacrosse, 1821), Part IV.

50 [5] PHENÉ A. SPIERS, *Architecture East and West* (London, Batsford, 1905). The paper on Jerusalem contains much that is interesting to students of the Crusaders' churches.

53 [6] A. W. KINGLAKE, *The Invasion of the Crimea* (London, Blackwood, New Edition, 1890). Volume I contains a dramatic and brilliant account of this momentous quarrel.

53 [7] The reason for the place where the present Mosque stands is the mysterious "Rock." A mass of tradition has gathered about it, and whatever was or was not believed of this stone, it occurred to no one before our own times to doubt that it was indeed the very *Eben Schatiyah* of the Jews, as it was the *Sakhrah* of the Mohammedans. Much as one's sense of the fitting would desire this Rock to be

actually the site of the Holy of Holies in the Temple, it does not appear to be borne out by facts. M. DE VOGÜÉ has discussed the question in detail in his great monograph on the Haram es-Sherif (*Le Temple de Jérusalem,* Paris, Noblete et Baudry, Libraires-Editeurs, 1864), and so far as I know his conclusion has not been upset—although it contradicts the hoary traditions of the rabbis of the third and fourth centuries.

57 [8] K. A. C. CRESWELL, *Muslem Architecture* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1932). It contains not only a summary with full reference of everything of interest that has been written about the Dome of the Rock, but many first-hand and valuable observations and suggestions, as well as ample illustrations. For a more popular account of the Haram es-Sherif and of the Mosque and the Rock, see H. C. LUKACH, *The Fringe of the East* (New York, Macmillan, 1913), Chap. IV.

58 [9] This question is fully discussed in the monograph by De Vogüé: see above, note 7.

59 [10] Translation in WATSON: see below, note 13.

60 [11] The Temple of Herod is fully described by the Jewish writer and warrior, JOSEPHUS (Ant. xv, Bell.Jud. 1,21:v:5). Of the character of Josephus, a learned, documented and critical account is given by PÈRE H. VINCENT in *Jérusalem* (Paris, Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1912), Vol. I, pp. 8-22.

60 [12] So many descriptions have been written of the Wailing at the Wall, that I forbear to add my own. H. C. Lukach (see above, note 8, pp. 108-112) has described it very well, and Pierre Loti makes it extremely vivid in his rather thin and sentimental *Jérusalem;* J. and J. THARAUD describe it in *L'An prochain à Jérusalem* (Paris, Plon, 1924)—to

mention a few recent writers. Of course Kinglake, Lamartine, De Vogüé, Chateaubriand and innumerable writers from all periods have left descriptions of it.

62 [13] COLONEL SIR CHARLES WATSON, *The Story of Jerusalem* (New York, Dutton, and London, Dent, 1912). I cannot do better than refer the intelligent non-spécialist reader and traveller to this little book, written with scrupulous knowledge and with a contagious enthusiasm.

63 [14] MICHAUD, *Histoire des Croisades,* 7 volumes (Paris, L. G. Michaud, 1819-22). One of the most fascinating and illuminating histories ever written.

64 [15] ERNEST RICHMOND, *The Dome of the Rock of Jerusalem* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924). Since my return I have read this book, than which nothing could be clearer or more beautifully illustrated. The author says very little about the mosaics, but discusses the structure of the building and its past and present condition, and the tiles that cover the exterior. His book is completely scholarly and satisfactory, with plenty of coloured and photographic illustrations.

65 [16] Mlle. Marguérite de Berchem has contributed to the book of Captain Creswell (see above, note 8) a section on these mosaics, which she has studied and described in more detail than any other writer.

Chapter IV

82 [1] PP. VINCENT and ABEL, Capt. E. S. H. MACKAY, O.P., *Hebron* (*le Harem el-Khalib*) (Paris, Leroux, 1923). A learned and interesting account of the building and its history.

86 [2] PP. VINCENT and ABEL, *Béthlehem, le Santuaire de la Nativité* (Paris, Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1914).

87 [3] SALOMON REINACH, *Cultes, Mythes, et Religions,* 5 volumes (Paris, Leroux, 1905-23).

Chapter V

90 [1] PRINCIPAL, THE REVEREND SIR GEORGE ADAM SMITH, D.D., F.R.S., *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1896).

99 [2] ADOLPH JACOBY, *Das Geographische Mosaik in Madaba* (Leipzig, Dieterich'scher Verlag, 1905). He quotes all the other authorities up to his date for the other mosaics in the town, but chiefly discusses the mosaic map in the Greek church. See also papers in the *Nuovo Bolletino di Archeologia Cristiana* for 1899, the *Revue Biblique* (Vol. I, pp. 625, 636, 637, 639), and the *Zeitschrift,* for articles by Manfredi, Sejourne, and Schuhmacher.

101 [3] MAX VAN BERCHEM, *Voyage en Syrie: Mémoire de l'Institut Archéologique du Caire,* 4 volumes (1813-14).

101 [4] CANON TRISTRAM, *The Land of Moab* (London, Murray, 1874). In this book (a much less entertaining volume than *The Land of Israel* by the same author) M'shatta (Mashita) is fully described. A supplementary chapter by Ferguson is supposed to "prove" that this palace was erected by Chosroes II.

There are two articles by Schulz and Strzygowski (*Jahrbuch der königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen,* 1904, pp. 205-373), the first consisting of measurements and reconstructions and the second splendidly illustrated. To any who can read Strzygowski's difficult prose and digest his still more difficult doctrine, this learned study of the

Palace of M'shatta should be of great interest, although some of its conclusions have been superseded by the discovery of Père Lammens alluded to in the text of this book.

114 [5] For example, Mrs. Inchbold's description and the illustrations in *Under the Syrian Sun,* 2 volumes (London, Hutchinson, 1925). She speaks of ruined sugar mills and Roman aqueducts hidden in lovely gorges, of overgrown remains of Herodian cities, enchanting streams and pools and waterfalls, all quite unknown to the ordinary tourist, although within an easy afternoon's excursion from Jericho.

Chapter VI

118 [1] The Samaritans believe that this mountain, Gerizim, was the place chosen by Jehovah for His sanctuary. But John Hyrcanus was evidently mightier than Jaweh, for he destroyed their Temple in 127 B.C., and it seems never to have been rebuilt.

118 [2] For further study of the Samaritans, see J. A. MONTGOMERY, *The Samaritans* (Philadelphia, Winston, 1907); and A. F. COWLEY, *The Samaritan Liturgy* (Oxford Press, 1900).

124 [3] Lady SYBIL LUBBOCK, *On Ancient Ways: A Winter Journey* (London, Cape, 1928).

136 [4] LEONARD STEIN, *Zionism* (London, Benn). This is an admirable monograph, which everyone interested in the question should consult.

149 [5] SALOMON REINACH, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions* (Paris, Leroux, 1905-23), Vol. III, essay 1: "Death of Pan."

Chapter VII

152 [1] PRINCIPAL, THE REVEREND SIR GEORGE ADAM SMITH, D.D., F.R.S., *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1896). Dr. Adam Smith has described the entrance to Damascus in so evocative a way that I dare not follow him with my clod-hopping pen. The reader cannot do better than to turn to page 641 and read on.

156 [2] Anonymous, *A Journey from Aleppo to Damascus* (London, 1736).

157 [3] A. W. KINGLAKE, *Eothen* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1917).

160 [4] For an account of the Druse-Maronite War, see Anonymous, *Rambles in the Syrian Desert* (London, Murray, 1864), pp. 228-255.

166 [5] In the opinion of PHENÉ A. SPIERS, *Architecture East and West* (London, Batsford, 1905), the large arch found here is a feature that came in only after the time of Apollodorus, the earliest example being in the Palace of Spalato, built by Diocletian in A.D. 284.

170 [6] GEORGE W. CURTIS, *The Howaji in Syria* (New York, Harpers, 1852).

Chapter VIII

187 [1] MELCHIOR DE VOGÜÉ, *Architecture civile et religieuse (en Syrie) du I-VII siècle,* 2 volumes (Paris, Baudray, 1865-7).

188 [2] Rev. J. L. PORTER, *Giant Cities of Bashan* (London, Nelson, 1867).

189 [3] JOHN LEWIS BURCKHARDT, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London, Murray, 1822). Pages 200 to 205 contain a first-hand account of the Druses

with lights that are not always too favourably upon their *mores*. He says that "unnatural propensities are very common among them."

189 [4] For a brief account of El Hakim, see PÈRE HENRI LAMMENS, S. J., *L'Islam: Croyance et Institutions* (Beirut, Imp. Catholique, 1926), pp. 149, 150.

190 [5] WORTABET, *Researches into the Religions of Syria;* quoted by LAURENCE OLIPHANT in his *Land of Gilead* (London and Edinburgh, Blackwood, 1880). The earlier book I have been unable to procure.

194 [6] PHILIP K. HITTI, Ph.D., *The Origins of the Druze People and Religion* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1929). The clearest historical account of this strange sect.

Chapter IX

198 [1] Accounts have been left by travellers to Palmyra in such volumes as:

Dr. WILLIAM HALIFAX, *Relation of a Voyage to Tadmore* (reprinted by the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1890).

WOODS and DAWKINS, *Journey in 1651* (London, Volney, 1754).

———*Les Ruines de Palmyre* (Paris, Constantin, 1819).

Dr. WILLIAM WRIGHT, *Palmyra and Zenobia* (London, Nelson, 1895). This is a fairly amusing tale of spirited adventure and hairbreadth escapes from Bedouin raiders. Wright's first visit to Palmyra was in 1872.

EMILY BEAUFORT. See Note 1, Chap. I. An interesting account of an adventurous trip to Palmyra about 1850 is given by this writer, who

appreciates the humour as well as the dangers of a caravan journey.

JOHN KELMAN, *From Damascus to Palmyra* (London, Black, 1908). Chapter VII describes his five-day ride across the desert. His adventures are not, as in the case of earlier travellers, with hostile or thievish Arabs, but with the changing lights and shadows, with sunrises and sunsets, with mirages and starlit skies.

199 [2] The official designation of the Christian sect commonly called Jacobite is "Syrian Orthodox." Their founder was Jacopo Baradi, who in the sixth century built up in Syria a Monophysite church. They are in communion with the Copts, and their liturgy, attributed to St. James the Less, is a Syriac form of the ancient Antiochan rite. They speak Syriac.

206 [3] The battle is vividly described by ZOSIMUS, a Greek historian of the time of Constantine, whose *New History* is merely a compilation from earlier sources. Trebellius Pollio, one of the Augustan historians who wrote under Diocletian and Constantine, has also much to say about Zenobia, and has also Flavius Vospicus, who gives the letters exchanged between Aurelian and Zenobia, when she haughtily refused his summons to surrender.

213 [4] IRBY and MANGLES, *Travels in Egypt and Nubia, Syria and the Holy Land* (London, Murray, 1844).

219 [5] HARALD INGHOLT, *Studier over Palmyresk Skulpture* (Copenhagen, Reizel's Verlag, 1928). The author gives fifty or so reproductions from which an excellent idea can be formed of Palmyrene art. He mentions between thirty and forty museums and some dozen private collections where specimens of Palmyrene sculpture are to be found. Constanti-

nople has the largest collection and next to it, Copenhagen, and many of the best are now in the Museum of the American College of Beirut.

225 [6] LUCIAN (London, Heinemann, 1913-25, Loeb Classical Library). Essay: "The Goddess of Surrye," translated by E. Harmon, Yale University.

Chapter X

234 [1] FRANZ CUMONT, *Etudes Syriennes* (Paris, Picard, 1917), p. 13.

236 [2] H. C. BUTLER, Publications of the Princeton University Archeological Expedition to Syria in 1904-5 and 1909.

236 [3] HERMANN BEYER, *Der Syrische Kirchenbau* (Berlin, Verlag De Gruyter, 1928), note 78.

240 [4] GERTRUDE BELL, *The Desert and the Sown* (London, Heinemann, 1907).

248 [5] REV. W. M. THOMSON, D.D., *The Land and the Book* (London, Nelson, New Edition, 1911).

249 [6] HENRY MAUNDRELL, *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem at Easter, 1697* (in Appendix *Account of a Journey from Aleppo to the River Euphrates*) (Oxford, 1740; London, 1810).

253 [7] DR. EDOUARD SACHAU, *Reise in Nord-Asien und Mesopotamien* (Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1882).

264 [8] MELCHIOR DE VOGÜÉ, *Architecture civile et religieuse (en Syrie) du I-VII siècle* (Paris, Baudray, 1865-7), Vol. II, Plate 93. Under the name of Kalybé, or "small chapel," the home of a god whose statue was generally within, and usually built in the form of a cube covered by a hemispheric cupola, De Vogüé discusses the question of the pendentive supporting the cupola, of which he finds instances as early as 282 of our era (emm-es-Zeitom or the Hau-

ran). These rudimentary pendentives he considers to be the key to the later honeycomb Arab pendentive. III, 9 and 10. As we saw the cupola Latakia and some of these early Kalybés we could not help wondering if such Greek buildings did not reveal the origin of the cupola, rather than Strzygowski's out-of-the-way Armenian churches. If you saw an African wearing a top-hat you would not conclude that Europeans' top-hats came from Africa, not even if this particular hat were of actually older fashion than any to be found in London. The buildings point straight back to architects trained in the Greek tradition, but stimulated by Roman models.

Chapter XI

266 [1] LIEUT. COLONEL PAUL JACQUOT, *L'Etat des Alaouites: Guide tourist* (Beirut, Imp. Catholique, 1929).

269 [2] MAX VAN BERCHEM, *Voyage en Syrie: Mémoire de l'Institut Archéologique du Caire,* 4 volumes (1813-14), discusses fully the construction of this building (pp. 289, 290). He says it was a tetrapylon, very early turned into a Christian church.

269 [3] Reproduced, but somewhat shorn of its impressiveness, as Plate 29 in DE VOGÜÉ, *Architecture civile et religieuse (en Syrie) du I-VII siècle.*

275 [4] It is not necessary to consult the earlier writers on the Crac des Chevaliers, for now we have the account of M. Paul Deschamps, who superintended the recent measurements and restorations there. His long and learned article in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (1929, T. i, pp. i-34) is amply illustrated. He says it is "the best preserved château of the Middle Ages, as well as the most complete, the most inter-

esting and the most imposing which has come down to us, not only among those in Syria and Palestine but also among those in our own country, France."

277 [5] These Sepulchral Monuments are reproduced in engravings by Henry Maundrell. See Note 6, Chap. X.

284 [6] RENÉ DUSSAUD, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairis* (Paris, Hautes Etudes, 129, 1900).

284 [7] MAURICE BARRÈS, *Une Enquête en Pays du Levant* (Paris, Plon-Nourrit, 1923), Vol. I, Chap. XI: *"Le Vieux de la Montagne";* Chap. XIII: *"Le Voyage aux Châteaux des Assassins."*

284 [8] PÈRE HENRI LAMMENS, S.J., *L'Islam: Croyance et Institutions* (Beirut, Imp. Catholique, 1926). The comprehensive bibliography, occupying twenty pages at the end of the book, can be consulted by those interested in the subject.

292 [9] See the learned and interesting account of these "High Places" written by CLAUDE CONDER, *Survey of Western Palestine Exploration Fund* (1881), pp. 258-273. He describes them as representing a cult which, there as elsewhere, is an amalgam of all the religions that have been practised in the land —predominantly the Jewish.

Chapter XII

297 [1] MAX VAN BERCHEM, *Voyage en Syrie: Memoire de l'Institut Archéologique du Caire,* 4 volumes (1813-14), pp. 105-112, gives a complete archaeological account of the town, with plans and reproduction of details.

300 [2] LUCIAN. See Chap. IX, Note 6.

Chapter XIII

304. [1] REV. W. M. TRISTRAM, *The Land of Israel* (London, S. P. C. K., First Edition, 1862).

308 [2] MICHEL M. ALOUF, *Histoire de Baalbec* (Beirut, Imp. Al-Igithad, Fifth Edition, 1928).

308 [3] *Baalbek.* Herausgegeben von Theodore Weigand. Text: Schulz, Winnefeld, Keurchener, Kahl, Schumacher, Sarre, Soberheim, von Lubke. Berlin und Leipzig, 1921-5.

Another German writer in 1892 gives an intelligent account of Baalbec and some very fine reproductions of the ruins: HEINRICH FRAUBERGER, *Die Akropolis von Baalbec* (Frankfurt a/M, Keller, 1892). Earlier still is the account of WOODS and DAWKINS, *Journey in 1651* (London, Volney, 1754).

318 [4] MAX VAN BERCHEM, *Voyage en Syrie: Mémoire de l'Institut Archéologique du Caire,* 4 volumes (1813-14). See Note 1, Chap. XII; pp. 336-341.

319 [5] JOHN LEWIS BURCKHARDT, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London, Murray, 1822).

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